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ESSE AND POSSE.

A COMPARISON OF DIVINE ETERNAL LAWS AND POWERS

AS SEVERALLY INDICATED IN

FACT, FAITH, AND RECORD.

BY

HENRY THOMAS BRAITHWAITE, M.A.

OF CAMBRIDGE

AND OF THE HONOURABLE SOCIETY OF THE INNER TEMPLE.

'Intelligo, ut credam.'—ABELARD.

BODLEIANA · BIBLIOTHECA ·

LONDON:

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

1872.

270. f. 302.

D. O. M.

To the Memory of

THE LATE

REV. WILLIAM WHEWELL, D.D., V.P.R.S.

MASTER OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,

HISTORIAN OF THE INDUCTIVE SCIENCES,

NATURAL AND MORAL PHILOSOPHER,

PRIMUS INTER PARES,

This Work is Inscribed

BY

THE AUTHOR.

INTRODUCTION.

THE poles of opinion, upon subjects of the highest importance to mankind, may be described as faith without knowledge, and knowledge without faith. Between them circle many latitudes, but only one golden equator, which of all these spacious zones appears to be the most unfrequently attained. An attempt, however, to approach it somewhat nearer than usual, is the *raison d'être* of this work; the conclusions of which are accordingly proffered rather as suggestions, than as pretending to any special authority.

From a belief that the pedigree, recently constructed for man, looms painfully between many of us and the Living Light, like the shadow of some

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Titanic simiad projected against the sun in his meridian splendour, I have endeavoured to reason it away. And inasmuch as Miracles, in their customary acceptation, tend rather to overcloud than to enhance the true spirit and force of Christianity, the sublime Ideality of whose AUTHOR the age takes too little into account, I have sought for them an interpretation free from the materialism which seems to underlie the religious theories maintained on the subject.

It were almost superfluous to apologise for boldness or freedom of handling, for surely no one will suppose that the impeachment of insufficiency laid either against Judaism, or against protoplasm and the molluscoid ascidian, has any designed application to the sincere piety of certain schools of theology, or to the acknowledged genius of Messrs. Huxley and Darwin. But if, notwithstanding the tenderness and obscurity of the subjects, good reason be rendered for withdrawing, from the eternal principles of Religion, the venerable but parasitical overgrowth of Oriental magic, and for sending home the uneasy gorilla, alarmed as he must be by

his recent enthronement and by the fixed gaze of astonished humanity, mere occasional force of expression will, I trust, be condoned.

The impartial Reader is requested to bear in mind, that, if he would realise fully the scope of the arguments, it is very desirable to form a large idea of time, not only whether for or against Mr. Darwin and the theory of Evolution maintained by his gifted European allies, but more especially in regard to doctrines of far greater moment. For the aim of this book is to urge, not that God does not govern the universe, but that He does: what is in effect maintained being that He has never acted, and that He does not now act, in an inconsistent or capricious manner; that from the beginning He has proceeded with unerring certainty and regularity, and that He never shifts the bases of His Eternal Laws, whether physical or moral, merely because men, falling into danger through disregard of them, may ignorantly, although not irreverently, beseech Him to do so. There is nothing indeed more difficult to be grasped by finite mind than the idea of Eternity, or of any other Divine attribute; but we should nevertheless

strive to apprehend the possibility, that the whole time and life of this world, even from the creation until now, may be but one single Thought of the ALMIGHTY.

H. T. B.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Protoplasm and Nilplasm	1
II.	Eschatoplasm	10
III.	The Darwinian Ascidian	25
IV.	Avolution	42
V.	Primæval Man	52
VI.	The Hebrew Ideal	74
VII.	National Predilection	85
VIII.	Moses	98
IX.	The Divine Ideal	108
X.	Wonder	117
XI.	Miracles	128
XII.	Testimony and Inspiration	136
XIII.	Incarnation	145
XIV.	Good and Evil	158
XV.	Immolation	171
XVI.	Ascension and Intercession	182
XVII.	Mind	197
XVIII.	Beyond the Grave	208
XIX.	Body or Mind?	207
XX.	Trinity in Unity	230
XXI.	Wife: Mother: Son of God	242
XXII.	Prayer, Praise, and Thanksgiving	251

ESSE AND POSSE.

CHAPTER I.

PROTOPLASM AND NILPLASM.

THE ORIGIN of the human race, when sought after only by the gleaming of second causes, is found to be enshrouded in mystery so impenetrable, that the express declaration of the fact can be justified only by the endeavours, recently renewed, to arrive by such light as this at some unanswerable conclusion. Primæval man nevertheless still retreats, and is lost under a whirling cloud whose axis is a solid as dense as the dark cone of waters formed by the revolution of the screw-propeller, and whose uttermost boundaries but a blinding foam of confusion. The mere approach to these confines of perplexity seems to humiliate the understanding. Even gifted natural philosophers appear upon entering to undergo a spell such as enthralled the victims

of Circe and of Comus. They become sensible of the inconvenient budding of a dorsal appendage. Ears begin to point themselves, and thick short fur to creep sward-like over the body. Doubtless, should a ruminant come at last to be preferred, the horns and hoofs, too, would be reached at some yet distant epoch, and man would ultimately find himself affiliated to the legendary devil. Acquiescence in such theories constitutes at any rate some proof of the absence of one of the strongest of human feelings, self-esteem. For it were more consolatory to believe that we had moulted down from the angel, than decaudated from the ape. Nor is it clear what may be the final advantage of tracing even that assumed rough copy, and candidate for the parentage of man, back to a deaf and dumb speck of being adhering to a stone, and behaving itself hydraulically. Speculation gets no further away from God by losing itself amid the obscurity of microscopic infinities. Nor would men, even if they desired it, which no one is justified in asserting, elude the Creator by assigning our origin to something inconceivably small, imperfect, and helpless—somé amorphous gelatine of chaos—something as next to nothing as possible. It is all in vain. Even such an atom or nucleus must be presumed to have possessed the principle of life and growth with which member, shape, size are

but little concerned. It is the existence of vitality itself which it is sought to account for, and nothing is solved by alleging it to be primarily extant, after all, of its own accord, in an ultimate plasmodic Nil, and that, too, with the power of evolving from the depths of its inner unconsciousness all men and animals, ay, and the gods and Muses as well. From what was the Nil itself developed? The theory appears to be affected with a weakness similar to that of the exploded baptismal doctrine of prevenient grace, which necessitated an ante-prevenient grace, and so back, *ad infinitum*, on an enormous and cumbrous scale of retrostruction. Accepting for argument's sake plasm or protoplasm, what and where was ante-protoplasm, or ante-ante-protoplasm? Doubtless in the same category as ante-ante-prevenient grace, and other similar devices.

The tendency, then, though it may not be the object of plasmody, is to arrive at nothing and nobody as the *primum mobile* of the universe—that is to say, that somehow or other it grew. But even between such a goal as this and plasm, there is a gulf quite as wide as between the latter and man. Man, as Pascal observes, stands between two infinities; and looking back for ever, will be unable to determine when and how life and growth entered of their own mere motion into nilplasm. For surely there must

have been a moment when nilplasm began to become, or became, plasm,—an original instant at the bottom of some infinite series when, moreover, it assumed the power of changing itself into plasm—of course we must not say when it *was* changed; and where and how did it acquire this faculty? Again, granting plasm to contain the principle of growth and power of mutation, how did it come to possess intelligence? the unconscious syphon acquire consciousness? the jelly begin to think? Whence did it borrow a will, and powers of motion and of contrivance, suitable even to the lowest of known organisms? What, too, and where is surplus plasm, or was all the material used up in the process of development? For it cannot be much less probable that man has been derived through the goat or the horse, than the monkey; and upon this view of the case, antique monsters, generally esteemed to be mythical, have, it may be, actually existed after all as man half made up *in transitu* to his present form. Certainly we should prefer to think even then that it was the human element which deposed the equine Chance had combined with it, rather than the converse. But plasm, being organically unconscious, would have experienced insuperable difficulty in effecting the attributed change, or any change, in its nature. Nor is there any imaginable process by virtue of which an

existence of such a kind could have spontaneously acquired will, senses, motion, and above all, instinct or any form of reason.

But there is yet another difficulty. If monkey was but the penultimate stage in the development of man, how comes it that monkey is still extant on his own account? Assuredly he ought to have entirely vanished on merging into the superior animal. Why then did he stop short? And this being so, present monkeydom must be expected in time to develope into more poor humanity, of which, strange to say, it appears to be the still existing dodo. When will it resume its long concluded operations? But from one and the same plasm descend, it would seem, both the races, so that there must have been a time when the development became forked (perhaps, through association of ideas, when legs were first resolved upon), one branch growing into man, and the other perpetuating monkey. What was the reason of this remarkable schism? With regard to all other animals, birds, beasts or fishes, each class must be held to have sprung from its own particular plasm, for clearly, so far at least as outward semblance is concerned, they belong to neither man-plasm nor monkey-plasm. There is difficulty enough with one of these essences, but how tremendous the affair becomes with many of them in

simultaneous operation! But in no case, and as to no series, can it be denied that all the successive intermediate steps and their representative members ought to have—must have, according to sound reasoning—disappeared, and cannot be now co-existent with the final result. Monkey, therefore, cannot have at once become merged in, and still remain flourishing outside the consummation of his development—man; and if man have really originated according to the Protean law of plasmody, then we must enquire for the penultimate stage among extinct creatures. Let us take the satyr, an altogether more human and more poetical character than the ape. It is true that in so doing we encounter horns and hoofs, with a strong suspicion of ante-prevenient goat; but these are not more impertinent affixes than tails. Failing the fauns, we must fall back upon the centaur, who will probably be hailed by an equestrian people like the English with acclamation, and as at once fully accounting for the popularity of the Derby.

There being nothing to show how plasm came to adopt so great a diversity of forms, it is reasonable then to assume the primæval existence of a great assortment of unconscious plasms, each of which must have contained the germ of a series of different developments. There were of course man-monkey

plasm, bird plasm, fish plasm, horse plasm, lion plasm, elephant plasm. These, together with plant plasm, insect plasm, and the rest, summed up in miniature all animate creation; yet all together could not muster a single thought among them. By analogy there had also been sun, moon, and planet plasm; indeed, the last mentioned is by some presumed to be still to the fore in the shape of fiery nebulous mist. The real enigma to solve is how it all came, even then, to arrange itself; for after going back for an infinite period, we arrive at a plasmodic universe *in petto*, a kind of cosmogonous aquarium adorning the first-floor window of the firmament. But where did it all come from? It has indeed been suggested that most of what clothes and decorates the earth simply tumbled off some other planet, as if that, forsooth, were anything more than another variation upon the too prevalent doctrine of material preveniency. For so also as to that other planet, we should be told that *its* plants and animals fell off yet a third planet, and so for a thousand planets back; until, compelled by sheer fatigue to cease the enumeration, we should be ushered into the presence of a self-created proto-planet, illumined by a proto-sun of the same description, the generator of original protoplasm: itself both the maker and the made.

The only system of development would appear to be within the cycle of a kind, but never from one kind to another. Breeding has, it is true, produced the racehorse, the greyhound so to say of his order; but could the associated wits of all breeders of stock lend the horse a single organic difference, provide it even with a horn? The child is born, grows to manhood, begets a child, and dies.[1] Dog in all his species is still dog, and cat cat; and could the first dog be summoned back from the womb of the past, he would wag his tail, and bark away as merrily as any dog of the period. Did dog-plasm look secretly forward with longing to the day when it should give tongue after Reynard? or man-plasm feel a thrill of joyous anticipation at the prospect of both composing and singing the sublime choruses of Handel? But that the dog at any rate was much the same over three thousand years ago, and probably right back to the Eocene period, as it is now, results from the subjoined extract from an ancient Egyptian letter,[2] the writer of which is supposed to be on a

[1] But the *dictum* of Goethe and others that this is *all* man can do is manifestly untrue. Was it all that Plato, Cæsar, Luther, Shakespeare could do, or did?

[2] *Prolegomena to Ancient History.* By John P. Mahaffy, A.M. M.R.I.A., Fellow and Tutor of Trinity College, and Lecturer in Ancient History in the University of Dublin. London: Longmans, Green, and Co. 1871.

hunting expedition in some distant province of the empire:—

'There are with me 200 great hounds, besides 300 wolf-dogs—500 in all. They stand ready every day at the door of the house at the hour of my rising from sleep. They make their breakfast when the barrel is opened. Let me have none of the dogs of the little breed of Ha, the king's scribe. This kind of dog is a stay-at-home; deliver me from them. Hour after hour, at the time when I go out, I have to flog him. The red dog with the long tail, he goes by night into the stalls of the oxen. He makes no delay in hunting. His face is joyful, like a god; loose him, he is delighted. The kennel where he abides, he returns not to it. *Postscript.*—Whereas a certain scribe of registration is staying with me, every vein of whose face is swelled—ophthalmia is in his eyes, the worm gnaws his tooth—I know not how to send him away entirely. My stores are sufficient; let him receive his rations while he remains in the neighbourhood of Kankan.'

And with regard to the postscript, it is evident that kindly hospitable feeling was no less the characteristic of human nature in those days, than the instinct of chase was of the noble animal which has ever borne the proud title of friend of man.

CHAPTER II.

ESCHATOPLASM.

It is clear, then, that just as the seed contains the future tree, and the focal point of light in the camera the whole of the picture, protoplasm—if indeed even for argument's sake to be regarded as a unit capable of infinite self-multiplication, and not fitter to be called Proteoplasm, from the vast variety of shapes it assumed at pleasure—contained within itself the entire coming man, through all his alterations of animal form, and all physical and moral possibilities, germinating together in a point which, not improbably, was the original one which had no parts and no magnitude. Magnitude, however, does not much affect the question. Principles have no size and no numerals, though they are sometimes made to appear all sixes and sevens. Nevertheless, Science in this our age bids fair to shut up her telescope with a clash, like one who has no more worlds to conquer, and in her popular manifestations is fast becoming nothing if not microscopical.

'The most delicate and dubious of all sciences, the microscopic, is also the youngest. In its manipulation the slightest change may operate as a destructive drought or an equally destructive deluge. Its very tools may positively create the structure it actually examines. The present state of the science, and what warrant it gives Professor Huxley to dogmatise on protoplasm, we may understand from this avowal of Kühne's:—"To-day we believe that we see, but know not that further improvements in the means of observation will not themselves reveal an illusion."'[1]

Man has accordingly been ascertained by some to be only a conglomerate of invisible self-willed vermin of the primal void. Others, creating a maze of their own, and following it, in perpetual hope or terror, as the case may be, of stumbling unexpectedly into the arms of God, seem to have preferred to expand man out of a poor molluscous seminonentity, rather than to condense him from some higher and larger antetype. Perhaps it is only a matter of taste, and so little do we really know, that one speculation may be as fairly put forth as another. Minimism, however, good, bad, or indifferent, has no value as such in regard to plasm, which the moment it chose to cease being nilplasm became infinitely greater (so to say) than nothing.

[1] *Protoplasm*, by James H. Stirling, LL.D. Blackwood: 1869.

To return then to protoplasm—which, in respect of power, is only a second cause in ambush a very long way off—it possessed, it seems, not only capacity for life and growth, but the forecast of a faculty of automatic selection. It could not only (definite animal form once attained) evolve itself into classes, but could invest these with attraction towards, or repulsion from each other. For such tendencies could not have been contracted from without—*there* was only the blackness of darkness; they were of course latent in the unit, which thus had not only the means of endless self-multiplication, but also of self-subdivision and variation, being at one and the same time of both centripetal and centrifugal predilections. What is more, it must have been the parent of all the wonderful design and sublime order prevalent in the universe. Protoplasm, then, must have been intelligent, but it was not. Yet without this all independent evolutions attributed to it are impossible, and, in a word, there could have been no such thing as potential protoplasm at all. For it stands or falls by its theory of self-development, which is the essence of the conception. How in the world could it have been at once the subject, the law, and the law-giver? Surely natural philosophy had better have borrowed of the wings of the morning from the Psalmist, and have at once alighted

somewhat nearer to Him, Who, fly whithersoever we may in thought be able, is ever there also before us.

For does any one who believes in the existence of the Almighty suppose that He could not naturally place upon the earth a being as far excelling man as man transcends the monkey, and the monkey plasm from first to last? Is it to be imagined that His creative or productive power is so hampered as to be compelled to crawl through ages of plasmody to achieve such a being even as man? Man, perhaps rashly, conceives himself to be a crowning effort of the skill of God, and would consider that, if yet another step can be taken beyond him, it must surely be the last; or is he too, like the monkey, an incomplete animal awaiting some ultimate physical variation? We cannot think so. Let us assume, then, that it were the purpose of the Creator to form, still in harmony with His general plan, which would no doubt result in some human resemblance, a yet higher being, wholly independent of man? How would He proceed? What dark fates and destinies are those which are held to have imposed upon Him the doom of eternal but imperfect concatenation? Yet we are called upon to infer that to effect His object He must first, unless He should continue His long-suspended work from man, con-

trive a new plasm — let us say not proto, but eschatoplasm, and be content to await its goodwill and pleasure to evolve itself, and wheel its subdivisions into line, or take ground in echelon, before arriving at His end. Nothing indeed could well be more inconsistent with that greatest of all revelations, the open book of Nature, in which the story of divine laws is everywhere visible to those who read between the lines. Is there really any trace whatever of any one kind of animal, not indeed being self-evolved, but of being even educed out of another? Not much force can be attached to the argument drawn from a certain similitude of structure, as evidencing intermutual derivation. All that this property goes to prove is, that all animals were designed upon a common and harmonious plan — to take one class, for instance, the fact of their vertebration and other marked characteristics constitute a more strong inter-similarity than likeness of outward form—a plan from whose operation in numberless parallel phases such resemblances would naturally arise, but certainly indicate no links of an ascending chain to man. Let us state the terms of the proportion. As man is to monkey, so is monkey to—what? What or where is the next and living predecessor in the series; and if extinct, when and why extinct? It

most inconveniently happens that there is no other animal that apes the monkey as the latter does man—at any rate in shape; so that it has proved difficult to make a suitable selection. But neither the elephant nor the bee is less sagacious than the simiad, and surely human descent is as probable from the invertebrate but articulated apis as from the invertebrate and inarticulated ascidian.

Seed and fruit, however, are never far separated, either in space or time. A bean straightway proceeds to bear its crop, and returns hundreds more beans. An egg discloses a hen, which in turn delivers fifty more eggs. Does the product of protoplasm pure and simple ever return protoplasm? And which, as Baron Liebig observes, preceded the other, the egg or the hen, or was, so to say, even in this modified form, plasmodically situate to the other? It is not a chain of operation of infinite length which truly represents nature, but of circularity. Suppose a being having even millions of limbs, which would be the first or the last? There is no beginning and no end, but the limbs, however far or near in respect to the heart or to each other, exist simultaneously. So all the factors in nature are rather in simultaneous, than successive operation. Nor, again, is the interminable flight of steps—'the

great world's altar stairs'[1]—so popular, of any avail to lead either away from, or up to the Creator. There is no chasm between Him and the beings He has made. He is at once at the base of the ladder, even were it Jacob's, upon all the landings, and at the summit to boot. Were not trees what they are, animals what they are, man what he is ages upon ages ago? All these in the lapse of thousands of years have shown not the slightest tendency to essential change of figure, or of habit and instinct. All the prayers of all the poets have not won a feather for the human shoulder-blade, nor a fin for the arm. The dove that flitted to and fro the ark was doubtless of the similitude of its descendants, which 'moan in immemorial elms' to this day. Birds have not leaned towards piscitude, nor fish to serpentinity. The hippopotamus has not slid down into the crocodile, nor the elephant discarded his trunk. Man and the ape were at exactly the same distance from each other then as now, except, perhaps—the latter even in instinct always remaining stationary—in mind. It results, then, that at a period far beyond all estimation, development, assuming it to have ever existed, had entirely ceased in operation. No date is assignable when man was not man, but somebody else. Go back ever so far, and man is still the child of

[1] *In Memoriam.*

man—the son, forsooth, of deaf, dumb, blind, and unintelligent plasm, after it had, with the evolutionary labours of millions of ages, accomplished the production of the monkey, last but one of a long chain of very curious but missing creatures—and then just thrown in a few millions more, time being it is true, no object, to pare and clip and polish up that interesting and amusing being into man. Nor can we suppose that Providence considered the ape and saw that it was not good—that the tail, too, was owing to an error in the calculations—and consequently determined to make a rather superior kind of vertebrate out of *some*, but not *the* monkey, for it still exists without one. But were that the case, the ape being only a stage in the production of man must have been an unfinished animal, and alone of all nature's portfolio of rough sketches of designs for humanity have remained, and so remained, to this day. For are not our beloved progenitors still with us, and that often in cages rather than in shrines?

To return, however, to the circle, or rather to the sphere. Let us take it as a type of order, of systematic arrangement. Nor is it an inept one, since the spherical, the true symbol of gravitation, is a cosmical form largely prevalent all the way from the sun to the orange, from the dew-drop and the bubble to

the world.[1] Let us imagine a hollow sphere, the superficies being composed of all creatures arranged as estimated according to their natural gifts and appearance. Suppose the ape be thus placed next to man on one side or the other, in the order in which they are fixed. Would that, if the illustration be a just one, the least go to prove that they or any of the creatures contiguous or otherwise on the whole round are derived from each other? Is any one of them really any nearer to, or further from the creative source than the other? Not at all. Whatever distance lie between themselves, even that of opposite poles, they are all equidistant from the common centre, without which, indeed, the sphere could not exist. Thence is it then that each of them derives his situation, and, the creative Power of the sphere, whence it is struck, being at the centre, his origin; juxtaposition in no case necessarily implying intermutual descent. They are related only through their radii—their lines of origination—meeting at the centre; man making, let us say, a much less angle with monkey than he does with horse, and with horse than he does with fish. This would at any rate appear a clearer and more true configuration than any borrowed from longitude. Lengths always perplex, suggest distances, and lead to false analogy.

[1] 'Sees now a bubble burst and now a world.'—*Pope.*

But can protoplasm be the originative central power? Is the great and most ingenious invention ever there sustaining its own development, perpetually feeding, renovating, and beautifying the life that all-where surrounds it? Or if protoplasm have been all absorbed in its creation of all things, or, as is clear, have for ages done developing itself; what, or rather Who is it that does occupy the station of the centric cause of life and mind through all the eons?

Scientific literature has, of late years, been completely overdone with metaphors taken from the chain. But the principal error which underlies the employment of this figure, is the tacit assumption that links, the only true relation of which is connection, are generative or causative of each other. That is not true of any chain material or moral. The links come into being from one cause, and from this results the common bond that relates them. Of metallic chains, whence in idea these metaphors are of course taken, we know that every link has to be separately fashioned of the required size, weight, and pattern (and in the same chain they are mostly all alike) but in no sense originates the next. So morally it is not, for instance, one crime of violence, be it his first or fiftieth, that leads a man on to another, or is its parent; but the continuous want of self-control in his character that is indicated

by these manifestations. The loosened principle lies there in his mind waiting for the damaged spring to be touched by opportunity. Thus what in a properly balanced temperament would be only reasonable indignation runs blindly off into rage, and warmth bestowed for self-defensive energy explodes in fits of ferocity, the natural fire of a man being, like the physical element itself, a good servant but a very bad master. Causes, then, which are in independent operation, or effects dependent upon different causes, cannot fitly be arranged in concatenary succession. The same is true of operations of universal growth, which are not so much consecutive as parallel. In nature life is so harmoniously and intimately blended that there is not a trace of any even link-like separation or conjunction. All moves bodily together from the first. The catenary method, then, is mostly lax and misleading, constantly jerking men off the right road of thought, or loading the mind with what proves but too often to be nothing but fetters to manacle its stride.

The attempt to establish deuteronomical causes—and protoplasm, however ably advocated, is only one of a class—must of necessity fail, as it has ever failed. If such investigations merely aim at unravelling the nature of matter, the fact should be clearly admitted. Like the mediæval search for the philosopher's

stone, the process might undoubtedly lead to important discoveries on the way. But an intelligent, and still more a responsible second-cause which is to be accepted even as proxy for a first, is in itself an inconsistency. It involves, too, a doctrine of impossible finality. At the same time it is neither wise nor fair to hamper natural philosophers with imputations of irreligion, or moral critics of blasphemy. Could the mind have been so easily daunted, could Thought have had her 'beamy vans'[1] clipped, and had not, on the contrary, scorched as she was, succeeded in soaring far beyond the reach of the tormentors of the Galileos of the past, the world would have remained hopelessly lost in gross and barbarous superstition, and have been for ever debarred from attaining to that higher and purer conception of the Divine Being, at which humanity unceasingly strives through all successive generations. Still we are justified in temperately contending with fair weapons against even a passing establishment of second-cause—final enthronement is impossible, while laws imply a Lawgiver—inasmuch as it tends to intercept the radiance of Eternal Intelligence, and to keep many goodly barques far too long tossing on the wildering waters from the assumed obscurity of the only beacon which can

[1] Milton's description of an angel's wings.

guide to a certain and secure haven. But Freedom has her perils as well as her privileges, and it is well that the former should be manfully faced in order that the latter may be preserved in their integrity. Moreover, men of opposite views have everything good to gain from open discussion, but from dogmatism and mere invective nothing but disappointment, and a sense of self-inflicted humiliation.

Now, according to Stricker, one of many authorities, there are club-shaped, globe-shaped, cup-shaped, spindle-shaped, bottle-shaped, branched, threaded, ciliated, circle-headed, flat, conical, cylindrical, longitudinal, prismatic, polyhedral, and palisade-like protoplasm. Add to which, brain, nerve, bone, muscle, and all other tissue protoplasm, and the family becomes somewhat numerous. The parental representative of all of them would, it must be inferred, be universe-protoplasm. Each one of them, however, only produces its own kind, although each compounded of oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, and carbon, in varying proportions. The German *savants*[1] generally rest upon a theory of original cells, not admitting, with Professor Huxley, a 'material basis of life' (independent of cellular arrangement) 'from the molecular changes of which all vital and intellectual functions "from the lichen to Leibnitz" come to exist.' The cellular theory, it appears, origi-

[1] 'Living *cell-body*,' Brücke; 'living *protein*,' Huxley.

nated in Hunter's discoveries as to the blood and its corpuscles. Even the cells, however, infinitely vary and differ *inter se*. Plants and animals, again, have a different and uninterchangeable plasm, and 'assimilate respectively inorganic and organic matter' — a fact of the utmost importance, as militating against the primal unity of protoplasm. The sketch earlier given is, then, no exaggeration. But it is most evidently on the principle of vitality[1] that the theory breaks down. Let us further cite Dr. Stirling: 'We are here,' he says, 'in the presence of a mighty gulf between death and life. . . . Was it molecular power that invented respiration—that perforated the posterior ear to give a balance of air—that compensated the *fenestra ovalis* by a *fenestra rotunda*—that placed in the auricular sacs those *otolithes*, those express stones for hearing? Such machinery! The *chordæ tendineæ* are to the valves of the heart exactly adjusted check-strings, and the contractile *columnæ carneæ* are set in under contraction and expansion to equalise their length to their office. Membranes, rods, and liquids . . . concerning which the express experiment of man was required to make good the fact that the inventor of the ear had availed himself of the most perfect apparatus possible. . . . . Are all

[1] 'It is as absurd to attribute a new entity *vitality* to protoplasm, as a new entity *aquosity* to water.'

these contrivances merely the result of molecular agency—is it to this that is owing the singular inward laboratory,' as Professor Huxley terms it, 'without which all the protoplasm in the world would be useless? The vitality of protoplasm cannot so result. Protoplasm breaks up, indeed, into carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen—like a watch into brass, steel, and glass, &c. The loose materials replace the latter's weight as accurately as the chemical constituents replace protoplasm. But neither these nor those replace the vanished idea which was alone the important element. . . . . Light might shine for ever upon matter without endowing it with an eye. . . . . No possible manure of human brains would enable a corn-field to reason.' Is it possible to improve upon the above admirable passages? although numberless similar proofs of special design might be instanced from the grandest astronomical compensations to the lenses of the fly's eye, and the setting of each hair of the lion's whisker? They sum up the question with the greatest truth and brevity. The accomplished student of the watch, let us call it protoplasm, much of 'artifice' as he has discovered therein, has, as Paley[1] would have said, entirely forgotten the watch-maker.

[1] See the great argument in Paley's *Natural Theology*: a work which, being much superior to the *Evidences*, ought to be an academical class book.

CHAPTER III.

MR. DARWIN'S ASCIDIAN.

PASSING here to the consideration of a yet more important subject, the observation may be permitted that no person of education can read Mr. Darwin's work on the Descent of Man, abounding as it does in most original and valuable lore, without the greatest respect and admiration, and it is, therefore, with much deference that any criticism upon his theory is here offered.

According to the doctrine of evolution,[1] it is manifest that Professor Huxley's protoplasm is the yet more remote original from which must be derived Mr. Darwin's ascidian; still there is nothing to account how the constituents of the former, namely, oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, and carbon, came to assemble and combine themselves together. Theirs surely was no 'fortuitous concourse of atoms.'

Let us examine a few passages from the 'Descent of Man.'

'If the anthropomorphous apes be admitted to form a natural subgroup, then as man agrees with them,

[1] 'At last, as at first, all that lives and every part of all that lives are but nucleated or unnucleated, modified or unmodified protoplasm.'

not only in all those characters which he possesses in common with the whole catarhine group, or Old World monkeys, but in other peculiar characters, such as the absence of a tail, and of callosities, and in general appearance,' — though this is over estimated—' we may infer that *some* ancient member of the anthropomorphous subgroup gave birth to man.'

Again, referring to a time yet further back: —

'Every naturalist who believes in the principle of evolution will grant that the two main divisions of the Simiadæ, namely, the catarhine and platyrhine monkeys, with their subgroups, have all proceeded from *some one* extremely ancient progenitor.'

Again, yet more remotely,

'Every evolutionist will admit that the five great vertebrate classes, namely, mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and fishes, are all descended from *some one* prototype.'

It must, therefore, be borne in mind that there are thus assigned three periods of vast duration with equally vast and uncertain intervals, in which there existed only one animal in the world, or at least only one kind of animal. Now if Mr. Darwin had held that one *class* of vertebrates, the catarhine, or Old World monkeys, had gradually risen altogether into a higher form, it would seem more reasonable. But he says that man, not *a* man, was born of some,

that is, *an* ancient member of the anthropomorphous group; and again, that still further back in time the two main divisions of the Simiadæ, and behind them all animals, have all proceeded from some one, that is, *an* extremely ancient progenitor. But is it not truly inconceivable that an only member of all these existing catarhines should have given rise to a whole new class, man, which has since remained invariable, and that all the remaining members should have gone on generating only their like? Again, did the original 'fishlike animal' possess also 'useless' developments indicative of its connection with the ascidian, and are these still characteristic of its descendant mammals, birds, serpents, amphibians, and fishes, as proofs of their primæval origin, and why, during such an immense lapse of ages, have they not all disappeared from disuse? And can the ascidian, expressly described as an '*in*vertebrate hermaphrodite marine creature,'[1] be the true parent of all vertebrate terrestrial animals, propagating their like as male and female pairs? And the breaks—there should be no breaks in an ever-operating law. It would seem, on the contrary, that the existence of vertebrate indications, however remote in time, proves that one common law of vertebration has governed the production of animals, but does not prove that they have

[1] Its *chorda dorsalis* appears at least to be somewhat ill-defined.

descended from one common progenitor. For otherwise there must have been a period when there was nothing pretending to organic life of even the lowest description, nothing in the whole universe but one invertebrate ascidian, and, later, after ages of evolution, nothing but one vertebrate mammal, and further on another and another, sole monarchs of all they surveyed. Surely such a state of things could not have long prevailed upon earth. But the interresemblances of animals cannot be disputed. 'He who is not content like a savage to look at the phenomena of nature as disconnected, cannot any longer believe that man is the work of a separate act of creation' (but he may be of a sub-act of one great act). 'He will be free to admit that the close resemblance of the embryo of man to that, for instance, of a dog' (why not *the* dog?), 'the construction of his skull, limbs, and whole frame, independently of the uses to which the parts may be put, on the same plan, the occasional reappearance of various structures, for instance, of several distinct muscles which man does not normally possess, but which are common to the Quadrumana, and a crowd of analogous facts, all point in the plainest manner to the conclusion that man is co-descendant with other mammals of a common progenitor.' Here also again we have the world in the sole occupation of one

animal, which must also have presented 'structures which' were 'not of any service to him nor' had 'ever been so.' Perhaps these were and are only redundancies, unavoidable traces of a general law of formation rather than of one predecessor, glimpses of one universal foundation in idea, for the construction must have pre-existed ideally in the Divine Mind, dots here and there, and private marks about the Divine signature. Now no one surely has ever been 'like a savage' enough to contend that man is not an animal, and as such, like to other animals, especially in the organisation of the 'internal laboratory.' But he is not *really* more like the ape than another. And if the embryonic resemblances (which have remained constant for many thousands of years, by the way) are proofs not, as we say, of universally *parallel* but rather of *successive* creation, why should not the descent of man be claimed according to Mr. Darwin's passage from *a* (for it is still not *the*) dog?[1] A monkey born of a human pair would be a monster, and so would a man born of a simial pair. But creatures thus casually engendered of only one member or pair of the human or any other family never repeat themselves and

[1] But as each embryo must be the epitome of each distinct creature, and as man could not descend from more than one (dog excluding all the rest, monkey all the rest, and so on) this affords the strongest ground for rejecting the theory of his descent from *any* other animal.

never found races. We are told also that not only *one* progenitor among the catarhines begot mankind, the rest of them continuing to beget their like (for we must understand Mr. Darwin to mean that there was at any rate one family, or race, not one sole animal, extant in the world at a time), but even it would appear that one of its ancestors also degenerated into the present ascidian. It is a most arbitrary and unaccountable proceeding on the part of evolution, that, at this precise conjuncture, it should choose to set off doing diametrically opposite things, and proceeding in absolutely contrary directions, and this too from the same date, day, minute, whenever it might have been. Now reason points rather to the primal agency of a common law of creation like all the other laws universally operating and—as this implies design and intellect—a divine law, in the present case vertebration. If there be animals in the planets, are not they too most probably vertebrated? Is there a planetary ascidian? The skull, limbs, and so forth (and therefore the mere external aspect like or unlike), may be dismissed. For, says the eminent naturalist, the Rev. J. G. Wood, alluding to a fact Mr. Darwin also cites, 'Anatomy shows that the essential skeleton is composed of vertebræ, and even the head is formed by the development of these wonderful bones.

The limbs are but appendages, and in many vertebrated animals there are no limbs at all.' Now this vertebration it is which contributes to all of them an essential likeness infinitely more telling than any subordinate similarity. Only on this ground the pretensions of the ape to especial osseous relationship are put out of court, for the other creatures have just as good a claim. And vertebration being the constructive law to which the mammals are in general subject, there is no reason why they should have borrowed it of each other, and passed it down in most eccentric single order, as is conclusively shown. Still less could they have primarily derived it from an *in*vertebrate mollusc. This great law governs the build of high animal form (and most likely in all worlds) as much as gravitation governs its position, and as a law is equally independent; for in what sense could liability to the effects of gravitation be caused or evolved by an animal itself? I claim then for vertebration (as well as for articulation, which is of even wider range, affecting also all the insect kingdom) the quality of a grand law of the Universe, neither this nor any of them being the result of evolution. And as all these laws evidently precede all the material embodiments which take place under them, and as clearly prove eternal and infinite forethought by their constancy and bound-

less 'unity in diversity'[1] of application, they can only have originated in Divine Mind, which, therefore, being their Common Progenitor is the same also of everything depending upon their operation. For no one—unless it be Mr. Darwin's savage—will doubt that the law, for instance, which suspends and controls the heavenly system, existed before (or at the very least is contemporaneous with) the creation of the orbs themselves; and what is true in this respect, of Galileo's or Newton's law, is true also of the laws of life, light, and form; true of the ideas and laws of vitality before any of its vehicles, of optics before the eye, of vertebration before the actual construction of animal being. These principles are emanations of Creative Mind, and are correspondent to Divine Idea, which both these learned philosophers lay out of the case. For what were the good of all the bones apart from the design which connects, combines, and varies them? And it is not the bones that make vertebration, but the arrangement, and, ultimately, the idea upon which the disposition proceeds. Besides, time is assumed, and order and sequence are assumed, and there is no proof concerning the ascidian and (say) the ancient fishlike creature, as to which preceded the other. If it were pos-

[1] An epithet of D'Aubigné's, descriptive of Protestantism.—*History of the Reformation.*

sible to discover the earliest vertebrated organism, the first exemplar of this stamp of the Divine handicraft, its priority would in no way prove that it was itself the cause or origin of the next, any more than the first or other link of a chain is the cause of the succeeding one. In the case under consideration, assuming Mr. Darwin's order as to periods, we have really a *catena* only of time but not of being. Each creature, by the law of reproduction, passes on its resemblance in its own line, for no more than any particular protoplasm is it capable of engendering anything but its like. Such at least as to animals is human observation; such presumably has been the case back to the Eocene period. And what can be more farfetched than the singular process by virtue of which, in long succession, one individual is always begetting a new race, only one individual of which again begets another new race, the last being the human one (child of *one* ape), *no* individual pair even of which thenceforward ever more does anything of the kind? Moreover, the assumption that evolution, for no valid reason, divided itself and went off at the same time upwards and downwards, utterly destroys its consistency as a law of operation. For here is a sudden and violent divergence—a law of simultaneous ascent and descent—ascent being really what Mr. Darwin so ably advocates.

Still further the omission of the idea from all this sublime construction; the silence as to the mind in which only could it have been conceived, is very difficult for the believers in evolution to overcome. For call it either protoplasm, formed of chemical elements from nowhere, or molluscoid ascidian, barely even alive, and even so of unexplained vitality,—they are both, without the governing idea, mere mute nonentities as to power, and capable, *per se*, of evolving only nothing. Now the existence of such a Mind is certain — if unerring Design eternally operating have any meaning— however unable some savage races may have been to realise its Presence in the world. But man perceives it, if some men do not, and it is more fair to appeal to cultivated than uncultivated man. We hear a great deal about the 'state of nature,' but is then education unnatural?—is it not one of the great laws of our being? Our own minds, too, are in harmony with the Divine: 'For in what,' says Professor Owen, 'do the mechanical instruments of animals, the hands of the ape, the hoofs of the horse, the fins of the fish, the wings of the bird, the trowels of the mole, differ from those we plan with *foresight and calculation* for analogous use, save in their greater complexity and their perfection, the unity and simplicity which are modified to constitute their several locomotive organs?'

But even were the sole eternal or *quasi*-eternal existence of a law of evolution conceded, it is clear that at a particular stage, namely, at some moment in the reign of a hermaphrodite individual 'resembling the larva of the present ascidian'—a NEW law, upon a directly contrary principle, suddenly branched forth from the parent stem and entered *pari passu* upon its functions—functions estopped, it must be presumed, as to the ascidian at the same time evolution ceased as to Man. Here then was a double arrest, one at each extremity. The human fig-tree, in one remote ramification only, began to bear thistles, and vertebration to engender devertebration. But it is the novelty which is here immediately objected to. Eternal physical laws have indeed been discovered or explained; but has there ever been known the arrival of a new-born law at all, much less one the offspring of its direct opposite, throughout the whole constitution and course of nature? The birth of this as of any new cosmical law must therefore be rejected, and with it, as the product that is to say of combined conflict, an event utterly impossible—the present ascidian.

The A and THE of Mr. Darwin's theory deserve particular attention, since the conclusions which follow thereupon seriously endanger, if indeed they be not fatal to his argument. At the risk of a

little repetition, it is better therefore to make out clearly the nature of the objection here put forth; since to the casual observer to raise a question upon the use of the indefinite and definite articles may appear hypercritical, but, to the philosophical enquirer, results thence gathered become sometimes of the utmost importance.

To account for the present existence of the gorilla and chimpanzee, which are described as being cousins of so many removes to man, constrains the doctrine of evolution either to assert (as it does) the descent of man from *an* ape, or to give up his assumed relationship to *the* existing ape. For if man were the consummation and crowning development of the simiadic ape, there could be no such ape now in existence. Again, if man, be the final issue of the catarhine ape, as a family class or order, it is clear that there can be no descendant extant but man himself as man. But there is extant a catarhine ape—for instance, the gorilla. Therefore, man has nothing to do with it, for it could not be at once summed up in man and yet be left outside of him. The like is true as to the platyrhines. And as, assuredly, Man could not be born of *an* ape, no more could *a* man (and a woman) be born of Ape, or even a man of an ape. Now, on the theory involved under the use of the indefinite article, and according

to distinct passages above quoted, wherein Mr. Darwin creates us, for instance, one piscatory, and later on one simiadic, then one catarhine progenitor, we have, assuming him at any rate to mean that there was in existence at each period, not merely one solitary creature, but a family of one kind, the following scale of ascent; of course abridged, but nevertheless true to the principle:—

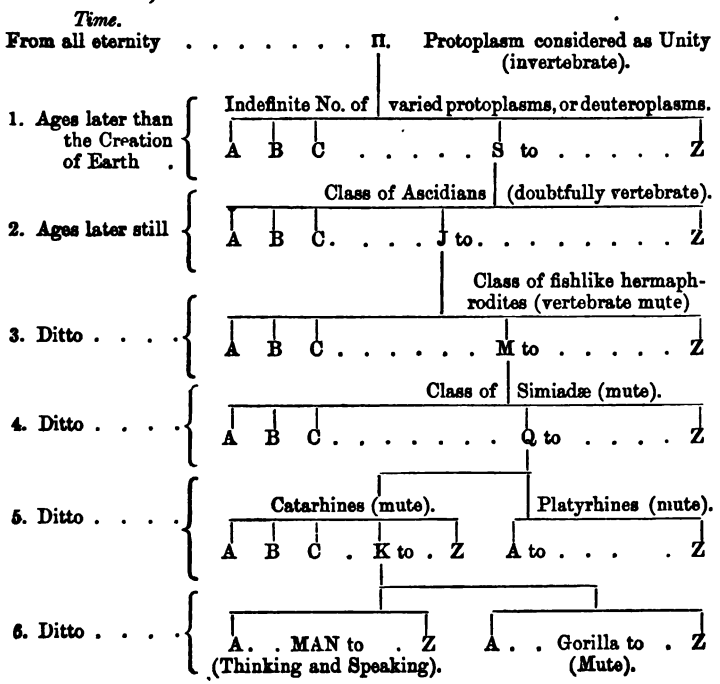
1. One ascidian parent of
2. A class of ascidians,
3. An individual only of which class gives rise to a higher creature up to
4. A class of hermaphrodite fishlike animals,
5. One only of which renews the improving process up to
6. A class of Simiadæ,
7. One pair (?) only of which engenders
8. A class of catarhine and a class of platyrhine monkeys,
9. One couple only of the former of which gives birth to
10. Mankind. And here evolution ended.

Now, to take any one of these stages (and the more of them the greater the difficulty), how came it that of all the contemporary animals of a family, only one individual in each tier underwent any change in its nature, and above all that the her-

maphrodite succeeded in duplicating itself into sexes? That there should have been only one animal and no companions at any period is inconceivable. For, say there were a thousand fishlike creatures living together, why did some *one* of them only beget a higher order of being, the 999 continuing to produce their like, or ceasing to produce at all? If even it be more credible that a whole class of vertebrates might have improved into a superior form, from the operation of their conditions of life, is it possible that any one individual member of it could have founded a new class, all its own relatives and comrades remaining unchanged, and so also all those of its new descendant, except, after a great lapse of time, yet again only one? Undoubtedly a sounder allegation would be of descent from a class, that is, the elevation of that whole class; but then the successive extinction of the stages follows inevitably, and men and monkeys cannot as relatives now coexist. Mr. Darwin's method of tracing only through one individual in every tier, seems to us to be equally beset with difficulty. How came each new comer to supersede all the existing creatures, being one perhaps among millions all propagating as usual? Could an improved man (and here an improved woman would be requisite as well to pair with him), born of some one human couple, super-

sede all living mankind? Such a new pair would be a drop in the ocean—and with whom could their children ally themselves without proximate relapse?

In a tabular form, the strange and irregular character of the genealogy of the Descent of Man becomes even more striking. Thus, supplying first steps from Professor Huxley, given time, space, matter (or at least oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, and carbon), vitality, and perhaps a few of the other great laws that govern the universe, and assuming evolution, we have:—



Here evolution has ceased, say since the Eocene period, 14,000 years ago.

In the above scheme, then, on the plan of 'some one progenitor' in every tier, protoplasm II gives rise to a class of deuteroplasms, only one of which, S 1, begets all the ascidians of which only J 2 is parent of all the ancient fishlike creatures, of which only one, M 3, begets the Simiadæ, of which only Q 4 begets all the catarhines and platyrhines, of the former of which only K 5 begets Man *and* the Gorilla (6), with whom the process ceases. Is it within the bounds of possibility, this erratic line of descent? It is purely miraculous. The opinion then must remain unshaken, that if Man have been evolved, it is only by classes, and not through individuals taken at random; consequently, all those earlier groups are extinct, and no representative of them but himself extant; or did some ascidians lead up to some animals, others to others?—in which case we return unavoidably to an elemental assortment of plasms, unable to account either for their vitality or their differentiation, and without a single idea, 'sans eyes, sans teeth, sans everything.'[1] Finally, if evolution of this sort were a natural law, it would, like all the rest, be ever in operation. But it has been determined for countless ages.

[1] The *Seven Ages* of Shakespeare.

After man, at any rate, comes profound stillness. No new kind of man has anywhere dawned upon the present race. The gorilla also has remained stationary. Neither have they commingled, but occupy the same relative position now, as in the most hoary antiquity. Nor has either of them proved able to beget anything higher than himself.

The ape necessarily thinks and cares no more about these things than the ascidian; and man will be content to abide as he is, and to continue seeking consolation in the love of the Almighty Father, who holds yet a little longer in reserve the glorious change that is to come upon him for evermore.

CHAPTER IV.

AVOLUTION.

THERE remains the converse operation to be considered:

'We should then be justified in believing that at an extremely remote period, a group of animals existed, resembling in many respects the larvæ of our present ascidian, which diverged into two great branches—the one *retrograding* in development, and producing the present class of ascidians; the other *rising* to the crown and summit of the animal kingdom by giving birth to the vertebrates.'

Here again we arrive at a very early 'common progenitor;'[1] and we find evolution arbitrarily dividing itself, going forward and backward at the same time, and becoming also a law of *a*volution—meaning, that is, of gradually stripping the creatures of the properties which evolution had itself intermittently bestowed upon them. This is utterly destructive of the supposed law, manifestly divesting

[1] Somewhat modified, since in the above-quoted passage it becomes a 'group.'

it of all that uniformity and constancy which are the characteristics of the universal code. And since it both evolves and avolves simultaneously, what is there to show under which of its processes man was 'given birth' to? Physical decline may be as probable as physical rise; but that both rise and fall should take place contemporaneously is impossible in virtue of the same law. Besides which, the old ascidian regularly culminating in the early common progenitor, and then lapsing methodically back again into the present ascidian, introduces a *third*, a uniform cyclic process, so that there are in conjoint operation evolution, avolution, and circumvolution, all being described as one and the same quasi-eternal law. But the Protean ascidian being now extant in the world both as man and yet, like Richard, as itself again, the existence of either surely negatives that of the other, as members of a common originative line. For to take but two, there was (suppose) either evolution, or avolution. Present man, it is said, belongs to the former; present ascidian to the latter. How then, can they possibly be connected? Again, the past *e*volutionary ascidian, if the original of man, can be no relation of the present *a*volutionary ascidian; but by circumvolution we have seen that it must be. And as the past ascidian must have issued from proto-

plasm, so must the ultimate destination of the present be to return to it. Moreover, as it is positively clear that man is at the zenith, since with him evolution has ceased, avolution must next come into play, and he too will redescend to protoplasm. In a word evolution and avolution cancel each other, if circumvolution do not previously demolish them both. But that all this anarchy, this dire conflict of principles should reign, so to say *in gremio* of the same eternal self-appointed ordinance, which according to Mr. Darwin must be acknowledged as an immutable natural law, beyond possibility of disproof or even question, might well form a subject for a chapter in Lord Lytton's imaginary 'History of Human Error;'[1] and if the control of the Solar System were liable to like caprices of self-will, there is nothing to prevent the sun from 'striking' to-morrow morning, planet crashing upon planet 'in hideous ruin and combustion down'[2] into the bottomless abyss.

The mode in which Mr. Darwin disposes of the immense superiority of the human brain is not satisfactory, any more than the theory that it was developed by language, rather than language by the brain, which is the simple and obvious fact. But the gorilla never had nor will have any language.

[1] *The Caxtons.* [2] Milton's *Paradise Lost.*

Ought not he also to have inherited the gift from such a long line of common progenitors?

'It does not appear incredible that some unusually wise ape-like animal should have thought of imitating the growl of a beast of prey so as to indicate to his fellow-monkeys the nature of the expected danger. And this would have been a first step in the formation of a language.'

The 'person' above alluded to is doubtless one of the common progenitors, and the attributed idea would have been a veritable inspiration indeed, especially if it had really originated even *a* language —a very different thing from language. But it appears, notwithstanding the unusual wisdom and happy thought assumed in the above passage, that although, let alone man, the present monkeys, his co-heirs, must be at an immense advance upon this initiatory Solomon of the Simiadæ of Eld, and therefore much 'wiser,' they have not profited by the prodigy more than to acquire at most some six inarticulate cries in their most eloquent member,[1] whether in six or sixty thousand years — for time may be taken *ad libitum.* And why was one catarhine only gifted with the germ of speech, and all the other catarhines and all the platyrhines left out in the cold? Notwithstanding the high authority

[1] The Celebs. *Descent of Man.*

of Archbishop Whately, it is a great wresting of expression to characterise the cooings and calls of animals, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, as language. For if indeed they be, our human method of intercommunication stands sorely in need of another name. Nor is it 'this wonderful engine' —(the Maker alike of the engine and the engineer nowhere shines through the hypothesis) that excites trains of reflection, but the converse; it is thought conveyed by means of speech from one mind to another that elicits answering thought, which in turn takes also form in language. It must be granted that the more excellent the medium, the happier the result; just as a finished telegraphic instrument offers far greater facilities than a rudimentary one, but neither one nor the other transmits any messages of its own. There is a mind at each end of the wire, often of a calibre it would be very unfair to judge by what, to coin a word which seems to be wanted, we may term their telegrammar. It is true there must have been some good mental exercise acquired through the reactive effect of interchange of ideas; but 'words mere words' could at best have only a gymnastic and by no means creative influence upon the brain, which was much the same, in respect of its immense superiority to that of animals, in the days of Thoth or of Confucius as

it is now. Deeper, and deeper still, within the human organ lies the living intellect, illumined by the immortal spirit of man, and ever behind each speech the thought that shapes it. And if these can fairly be traced to have even latently germinated in the ascidian, it might be less reluctantly accepted as the Ancestor of Humanity, since in comparison with them, cells, sacs, orifices, bones, bodies, and all their machinery, even the great material globe itself, are but mere dull matter, and without them, divine and human, only a vast and varied embodiment of many forms of either death, or what the poet Coleridge calls the 'nightmare death-in-life;'[1] for a universe of which the monkey exhibited the highest mental type would be but an infinite Bedlam. Has there ever even been a catarhine which was to other apes as the Herschels, explorers of the heavens, to the ordinary villager? Apes possess no mind, and never have acquired any (for the docility, or what Dr. Whewell was wont to call docibility, of here and there one, is nothing to the general purpose) in the sense that human reason affixes to the word: and intercept Mr. Darwin's long and ably-compacted coil wheresoever we may, whether at the piscatory, the amphibian, the simiadic, or the catarhinean splice or junction, it is not

[1] *The Ancient Mariner.*

to be perceived that intellect anywhere strikes in a single strand to blend with it. Certainly it starts with none; it resembles an Atlantic cable without the medium for the electric current. And if it be answered, that mind (be it remembered as an eternally heritable power) glanced in on the first appearance of man *in partibus Simiadarum*, that amounts to admitting a special act of creation; and surely this endowment is a greater proof of the existence of Omnipotent Intelligence than the production of all the mere bodies in the universe taken together. But that which was never in this fabled ancestry could not ever be evolved out of them nor supplied by their own will; and, if man really result from any kind of evolution at all, certainly mind must have been an essential element in the prototype. It is one now at any rate, for without it man would be 'poor indeed,' and nothing but an idiotic perambulator. Fold after fold through all the ages did these fishlike and apelike creatures unroll, de-fin, and de-tail themselves but, whatever useless resemblance they may claim from their vertebration, or be otherwise held to have disclosed in their transformations, maintained, from first to last, whether begetting or begotten, except for their customary roars and murmurs a profound and significant SILENCE—the most eloquent possible proof that,

children of protoplasm if they indeed be, they never were nor are of kin to Man.

Nor can the idea be accepted that the moral sense results only from the comparison of our actions with a general 'social instinct'—the protoplasm or ascidian of conscience.

There is one distinction at least to be drawn. A social instinct lives, as Mr. Tennyson says of merit (and it is often equally true of demerit) 'from man to man, and not from man, O Lord, to Thee;'[1] for how can a man be governed by a social instinct with regard to his inner self? Conscience is not shared with others, although conscience may give rise to sympathy. The silent monitor and the Ego[2] commune together alone, and between them only, in the first place, goes on every conference that determines consequent action. Mere social instinct, if allowed to intervene, would but too often give a man cause to exclaim, 'Meliora video proboque, deteriora sequor,' for sometimes, in deference to some assumed social law, it would, as was formerly the case in respect of duelling, incline the scale against eternal principle. Social instinct, too, is not very consistent with evolution, for surely

[1] *In Memoriam.*

[2] Each man has a yet superior man dwelling within him, who is properly himself, but to whom he is often unfaithful. It is to this interior and less mutable being that we should attach ourselves, not to the exterior and changeable everyday man.—*Humboldt.*

all instincts are innate, and therefore the social one, or conscience, is so too. Now in which of the long ancestral line, as before observed of mind, was it first inborn? and if inborn, could it have been otherwise than hereditary, and have passed down from the first? But if it be held that the social instinct, or conscience, is not inborn, but only a variable and uncertain acquisition, it must differ in all men, and some may not possess it in any form. At any rate, no particular conscience would ever be much above the level of the prevalent tone of the time; and yet are not human beings aware of the existence within them of a standard which immeasurably exceeds their best endeavours to act up to it?—and struggle onward to the Eternal Light as they may, do they not feel moral alp on alp arise to the very last day of existence? On the general question:—instinct, like the spirit of life itself, remains as wholly unaccounted for by evolution with respect to the lower animals, as do reason and conscience in regard to man; nor is there anything to show when and how this unvarying faculty pontooned itself across the profound gulf which separates it from the immeasurably higher human endowment. Did even that ancient fish, the lemur, or the simiad compass the achievement? But whichever one be assigned, the deed, once admitted, sunders the interminably darkling chain of derivation like a thunderbolt. In a word, evolution wears throughout too much the appearance

of codified wilful accident: Hazard labouring *pede claudo* along, under the weight of the simulated *spolia opima* of Divine Design, and betraying its embarrassment by repeated delays and panting stoppages—breaks of continuity in the argument for which it is impossible to render any satisfactory reason, except the inherent debility of the entire system in support of which it has been so carefully elaborated.

Now with regard to the 'materialism,'[1] which as it is commonly understood, some ascribe to Professor Huxley and Mr. Darwin, it cannot be supposed that either philosopher holds that even oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, and carbon, created themselves. They therefore have probably some view of the acts of God, which merely because it may differ from that generally received by equal minds, is not the less entitled to respect. One thing at any rate is certain; society owes them lasting gratitude for the skill and patience with which they have so long investigated so many difficult problems of nature, and become mighty pioneers in the further clearing of the bush of ignorance before the advancing footsteps of discovery, even though sometimes making, in reality, other openings than they may have at first contemplated.

[1] *Naturalism* would be a more fair epithet.

CHAPTER V.

PRIMÆVAL MAN.

It is possible that Earth and her waters at a certain stage of refrigeration from the enormous heat in which she first flashed forth upon her way, arrived at the exact condition in which, and in which only, to everywhere generate, and bring forth in order all living forms, and that so this 'universal frame'[1] began to teem with being. Man and all animals may have lain gradually forming on her surface, until the arrival of the completing crises, which were to cause them to emerge. Embryos *may* thus have first been formed and matured in a reasonable, perhaps a very brief space of time, by the operation of physical but no less Divine laws, which, determining in material and shape, awaited but a suitable condition of atmosphere to stand confessed in life. For an æther much more rarefied than ours which might have served for the fusion and combination of the requisite chemical elements, to which no conditions

[1] 'In harmony, in heavenly harmony,
This universal frame began.'—*Dryden.*

now extant would have been equal, must still have been such as no living animal could have breathed. There was then probably a crowning period in which moist respirable air bathed the shrouded and entranced forms which the last touch of the departing creative urgencies had just inly completed, sundered the spiracled ceramberine cells amid which the first pairs lay enveloped, stimulated and expanded the hitherto inert lungs, and man in his turn awaking rose and gazed around.

But if in infinitesimal minimism lie the proper direction to look, animals must have been first expanded from the minutest nuclei by some occult process in dealing with matter analogous, fanciful as it may seem, to that followed in the enlargement of almost invisible photographs. Here, then, was the inception of the law of growth. But what is magnitude to the Divine Planet-builder, or time to the Eternal? Time indeed the evolutionists draw upon at pleasure in enormous spans, but why should the Almighty be held, for the sake of their doctrine, irretrievably committed to small beginnings—like a diminutive godling who can but make something as imperceptible as himself, and is compelled to wait untold ages for it to arrive at maturity?

If, then, it be true that there were pre-existing aws and a previous design—the laws, at any rate,

not even that mythical creature the atheist will disown—it follows that man shone forth in idea or ever he was formed in fact, for he, like the universe itself, is the product of many laws acting in special combination. Now, what principles, or powers originative of laws, must have been assembled in conceiving the Idea of Man? Some of them are as follows, although the numerical order cannot be insisted upon: Eternity has no firsts nor lasts. 1. Vertebration; 2. Articulation. That these are distinct is clear, from the fact that there are inarticulated vertebrates, and an immense number of articulated invertebrates. 3. *Subgravitation*:[1] meaning thereby the law harmonising form and weight of parts, and deciding their position and proportion,

[1] It is clear that in contemplation of posture, and motion by leverage, the distribution of the weight was of the utmost importance; hence it primarily governs form, and is the cause, for instance, of the *tapering* of the limbs. Their *roundness* evidently belongs to the domain of ramification, for we observe the same law in trees and plants depending on circulation of sap. Articulation in concurrence with subgravitation governs the number and length of the bones and construction of the joints. Surely all this proves forethought. Even if Evolution might have presented herself with a useless eye in an abnormal back, she would never have placed it, with the other organs, in immediate radial relation with the brain. But evolution upon a preconceived plan amounts to creation, time becoming the distinctive element in the doctrine, and that, in regard to eternity, of no importance at all. It is also evident that subgravitation is a preordained law because it is to immediately govern, not the embryo, but the born creature. It does in fact control the embryo too, but *with an eye to the future*—it takes the outer world into account, just as the shipwright does the sea.

without which our bodies, could they have existed at all, might have been mere engines of torment. 4. Mechanics, statics, hydrostatics, dynamics, acoustics, optics. The Almighty is the supreme mathematician and physicist, as well as astronomer, from Whom, though at an immense interval, all our sciences are borrowed or imitated. 5. Chemistry of bone, flesh, blood, and tissue of all kinds. 6. Arterial, venous and nervous Concentration and Ramification. 8. Respiration and Perspiration. 9. Assimilation of food—the law of the 'wonderful internal laboratory.' 7. Circulation of the blood, Harvey's law. 10. Motion. 11. Growth. 12. Sex and Reproduction: Death, as including disease and decline, is an effect rather than a cause. 13. Cerebration,[1] and Convolution[2] of the brain. 14. Organisation of senses and mind. Now all these, as ideas, and many more which so overlap each other that to attempt classification would be hope-

[1] Supposing the principle of vertebration to underlie or to be intimately connected with (α) cerebration and (β) convolution, are causes of insanity to be looked for in impaired vertebration during growth? Does violent 'education,' i.e., knocking about of children and excessive flogging of lads, tend to injure the spinal and cerebral nerve-centres, or ganglions, during their development?

[2] The microscopic discoveries of Tiedemann of insect and animal convolutions in the human brain, *plus some peculiar to man*, are really against the theory of one common progenitor, and favour that of one common design. The convolutions are probably not increased *in number* by study, any more than the nerves and muscles by exercise.

less, must have been pondered in one Intellect and exactly combined and planned ere aught was actually created, for the results, like all Divine results, are unerring and that too in harmonious perpetuity and unity of aim. This proof, being based on essential fact and truth, patent to all men, is incontrovertible. That anything, much less any originative law, could evolve itself into such consummate symmetry, resting on the adjusted balance of the mightiest ordinances, is a proposition which, assuming everything, simply accounts for nothing. Now, the process by which God first created matter, having probably, like the umbilical vein (which becomes a mere redundant ligament), merged in the rest on the accomplishment of its work, human thought as yet fails of discerning. Perhaps it belongs to the law of Sustentation. Of matter Professor Huxley's chemical protoplasm may be held to suggest a base; still, even then, oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, and carbon never made themselves. As to minimism and maximism—microscopic and telescopic tendencies[1]—the cosmical laws are themselves of such vast range that we should naturally expect the greatest embodiments to have occurred first, as in the case of a thousand Suns and Jupiters they

[1] See Archbishop Whately for some able remarks on the word 'tendency.'

manifestly did. But leaving magnitude aside, does there appear anything at all repugnant to reason in believing that the All-powerful and Beneficent Being who could create such principles and think out such a design, could have experienced no difculty in projecting matter wherewith to invest, and so to say, clothe them for operation? Is it not conceivable that matter, of which visibility is no essential characteristic,[1] may, on the analogy of chemical mutations, have resulted from the general combination of the laws? At any rate, it is in comparison of quite secondary importance, and its origin is obscure only to man. Eternal light embosoms no dark mysteries, breeds no confusion, harbours nothing essentially inexplicable. The foregoing scheme, then, proffers a not unreasonable theory of the Creation from the inner and deeper point of view, for who can impeach the fact, that laws precede their manifestation in form and substance? Could it be held for a moment that the Author of these principles and powers was, or is, ignorant of their simplest or most recondite rules? The infinite Lever, even that of which Archimedes dreamed, and the universal Eye, absolute proof of contriving forethought, exist primordially from all eter-

[1] May there not exist beings who would drown in our air, just as we do in water?

nity in the mind of All-moving and All-beholding God.

That the great laws, for instance, of light and gravitation existed even before the creation of this planet is more than probable, since the same must be assumed of the sun. Why not, then, the laws of optics depending upon light, and of structure, and form? The law which made the earth a globe doubtless ultimately governs all other shape also. The spectroscope discloses solar combinations, which leave no doubt of the primal existence of the laws of chemistry. Heat, electricity, magnetism, we are assured of; and as to the last mentioned, a magnetic needle would from the very first have pointed to the pole. Why, then, should not the remaining ordinances be held to be equally eternal? Those who reject Divine Mind as mere pious theory, must at least accept, in the domain of Esse, the sun as a fact probably pre-existent to the earth as a fact. Whence it follows, that, all the laws necessary to the production of animal life having been in force from the beginning, it becomes quite unaccountable why they should have experienced any more hindrance in starting with a man than with an ascidian; the difficulty respecting matter, though it is little worth, remains a constant in the argument equally applicable to both; but the composition of the brain,

the construction of the eye and perfect vertebration being, for instance, quite as much within the power of the laws as the little sac and the questionable *chorda dorsalis*, no reason remains why, as to their fuller manifestation, they should have rested dormant, and contented themselves with endless ages of absence and silent self-suspension, and then suddenly have ventured upon only so slender and lonely an achievement. *Complete* man, therefore, is demonstrably within the scope of the eternal Posse, and stands in no need of piece-work, which would but have signalised an effort on the part of nature, although immeasurably rich in powers such as have been described, to make as little use of them as possible in the production of man, on account forsooth of the obstinacy of matter, though there probably exist vastly superior beings, to whom the possession of visible body is of no sort of importance. But nature never disports herself in this wise. Evolution then demands for its justification, not only the gradual unfolding of the creature, but the prior unrolling also of the laws essential to its being; but these being eternally co-existent together in full power before even Earth itself appeared in the heavens, there was clearly no occasion for evolution, nor any kind of scope for it at all.

But assuming that the origin of life is to be sought

after in little things, it seems, for instance, looking for a moment to oviparous generation, less difficult to imagine a first egg having been accreted in the slime of Nile or some oasis of the Desert, from which the first pair of crocodiles or ostriches were to break, for surely no hermaphrodite creature could have evolved itself into a perpetual couple, than the direct composition of fully formed animals; for in the former case, though the egg contained all the constituents of the future creatures properly commingled, we know that without heat there could still be no result; and here, at least, can lay hold of one definite step, one prime factor in life-creative work. Is, then, the preparation and combination of human elements as a phase antecedent to the advent of a special condition of atmosphere, heat, light, electricity, or all combined, to bring the predetermined germ to life, inconceivable in the case of man? Mortal man perchance arose from a creative grave, as he returns to a dissolving one; do the Pyramids commemorate the site, or is this the secret locked in the bosom of the Sphinx? Two things at least are certain: no pair were far apart from each other either in time or place; and they were also adult upon their issue; if otherwise only God was nurse. It is almost equally indisputable that they must have understood their sexual relation to each other, and have at least pos-

sessed all such spontaneous powers and resources as are generally ascribed to instinct, which in other animals never proceeds beyond certain limits, and moves in an invariable orbit, but in civilised man is mostly overlaid and lost by a violent or an over-dependent education, all gifts peculiar to it rather than to reason (for instance, presentiment of danger),[1] being thrown into abeyance by the superior but not all-inclusive faculty. Human beings, however, doubtless possessed mind from the first.

As such a change as that above contemplated in the earth's atmosphere would be general, it is not improbable that not only one, but many human pairs, slightly differentiated by climatic causes, whence perchance the various races, came into simultaneous existence; but if there were only one, we are certain at any rate of *two* distinct beings, male and female, entering upon life; and, if other first pairs in various primal cradles of the world be admitted, then of several independent centres of generation, and coeval firstmen. Such events would presumably have occurred in oases of an abundant nature, not in cold and barren latitudes, but in situations of great warmth and fecundity. For doubtless man's inexperience was foreseen and

[1] The existence, however, of this faculty in animals, is much disputed.

provided for. Whatever the embryo, and however enveloped, whatever may have been the umbilical means which attached it to sustaining Mother Nature—for man was not moulded in the open, like the model of a statue, nor could have had an artery added in one era, and another in the next—it must have been human in design, in epitome of intention, from the first, and contained the principle of his vertebrate structure, of bone, muscle and nerve, so laid and combined as to result in his present body and no other. The like may be true of those other animals, whose vertebration indicates the operation of a common law, and pleads for the universality of the creative and expositive conditions. The several forms and brains were likewise harmoniously projected in precise adaptation, each to each. Animal organs and senses are so exactly fitted by the Almighty to their special needs, that it is not credible that they were the subject of any kind of caprice of nature, or waiting upon Providence, or were in any way annexed, or developed from time to time by chance medley, as now one chamber is added to a house and now another, till the long-descended proprietor comes at last to reside in a dwelling of all styles and ages from Roman, it may be, if like the illustrious King of Italy he trace back to some Senator like Caius Actius, down to

cottage Gothic. In no such habitation dwells the spirit of man, and no five orders of architecture are his five senses. To allude only to the ear, for instance, and its adaptation to sound, it could not, whether man were slowly formed, or sprang erect at once out of the Will of God, have been an after-thought, or been acquired from without, or deposited by the action of winds and waters, however often they may

> Sidelong have pushed a mountain from his seat,
> Trembling with all his pines.[1]

Nothing indeed is gained by the hypothesis of time, considering the Eternal Omnipotence of the Creator; only imperfect human apprehension requires it for a staff to lean upon. But the scope is ever complete from the first; as in the acorn lurks the oak, and broods in the worm and the chrysalis the moth. So is it with all His works. The ideas or 'patterns'[2] must have ever pre-existed in the Divine mind, One little likely indeed so to mix them up as not to know one from another. If, then, there really were human embryo, formed and growing on to meet, as it were, the embrace of the Respiratory Period, in no circumstances could it have produced a serpent, a fish, or a monkey—and the converse. It comprised not only head and the brain to fill it,

[1] Milton, *Paradise Lost.*

[2] Plato.

but the latent spark of intelligence to dawn upon the brain; the hidden mainspring to quiver responsive to the presence of the principle of immortal life, vibrant as the magnetic needle to the pole. If it were but as an atom, all the man was there. Even plasm with God and without, are wide as life and death asunder. While all animals depend upon food, many have like methods of motion, joints and leverage, propagate their young in like manner, suffer from like causes, and so die. The general and vital resemblances far overbalance in import whether certain similarities of outward form, or dissimilarities in proportion and habitual posture, so that for the matter of that, man is truly as much *like* an elephant as he is like an ape.

But however man came upon earth, he must have been as one waking from a sleep into which he had no recollection to have fallen. Language, too, had still to be formed, necessitating a lapse of time long enough to ensure everything that might have been known being altogether forgotten. It was probably some generations before speech was sufficiently regulated to be capable of describing any complicated event, however perfect the mental appreciation of it, and, even then, any oral tradition would have experienced customary vicissitudes. The creation of man, therefore, has not been miraculously or specially veiled from his posterity, but

remained concealed through the operation of natural circumstances, and indeed all the first human pairs could have known was in what places (though these were anonymous), and under what conditions of living they first found themselves, the rest remaining lost in obscurity. Nature sat impassible, with her finger on her lip, maintaining a serene, but still awful and impressive silence. But whether we assume creative laws of long or short duration (and we are somewhat doubtful about interminable eras) the proofs of intelligent design and adaptation are equally overwhelming, and of distinct, not confused design such as would have educed man from another animal. Imagination may bestow upon man a purely aquatic or a marine origin, an idea not unfamiliar to the ancients, who declared Venus Genetrix, the universal mother, to have risen from the sea;[1] but she takes a soberer flight in believing him to be the true offspring of earth impregnated, in her most fertile centres, by the sun, under physical conditions ages since passed away, so that indeed the identical process can never be repeated. Nor was it intended to recur; possibly could only have taken place at one precise conjunc-

[1] Mr. Darwin's tidal or lunar theory as to the ascidian is certainly a proof of his vast powers of observation; but is it certain that the influence of the satellite is felt only by the ocean, and in no way on *terra firma*?

ture, seeing that continuous reproduction has been provided for by the scope of the design, in some kind of parallel to which lies probably the clue to the original method of production. For man and woman must, each of them, have sprung from analogously male and female principles in combination, for from such an inherent cause only can it be that they derive the perpetual faculty of reproducing male and female offspring.

Man then awoke, it may be, amid palms and fountains. His first habitats were indeed regions of terrestrial paradise, such as lie near the Nilotic lakes (and it is not improbable that Egypt was one of the primal cradles), and to these in every instance he clung, until increasing numbers or intestinal discords forced many bands of individuals over the sacred borders. Those compelled to migrate would feel all the sorrow at quitting their motherland, and all the dread of the unknown world before them, which have been attributed to Adam and Eve upon their expulsion from Eden. The first great event of the kind gave rise to that venerable tradition. But the flaming swords were probably those of successful civil war, or even of invasion, since nothing would be more likely to have occurred than a succession of contests for the possession of the maternal breasts of a world whose limits were ever

those of the visible horizon. The cause of the first bloodshed of sufficient consequence to make enduring mark upon human memory, was most likely a disputed right of inheritance to some primæval centre, and legendary Cain may have been (like Jacob) the younger, not the elder brother or race, for the legitimate heir is far more often the assailed than the assailant. The rule of the strongest must have long prevailed during the epoch of the inceptive formation of society; nor does the near relationship of the contenders lend much additional horror to such commotions. They had no choice; all men being indeed brothers, and their wives often their sisters. It would be as fair, therefore, to impute to them the moral guilt of incest, as of fratricide; besides which, from the highest point of view, it is as much fratricide to kill any man as a brother. The exiles doubtless went, as usual, far beyond the reach of pursuit, carrying with them whatever system of polity and religion they may have been reared under. For the 'noble savage,' whose conscious virtue is probably an appanage of the ignorance which is bliss and the innocence which knows no shame, could not long have held his own in regions of surpassing fertility. A qualified civilisation must have dawned very early indeed; ages perhaps before her rise there were empires greater than Assyria among the ancient

peoples, so highly endowed by nature, and possessed of abundant means, leisure, and therefore time and scope for meditation. But, whatever the beliefs and customs of the emigrants, these would be affected by their change of circumstances and fresh conditions of life; and thus, in many widely separated colonies, came to pass the naming of God by many different names.[1] Montagnard people would look up to Him as reigning amid their highest peaks; maritime races adore Him as the mover of the sea; the settlers in lands flowing with milk and honey as the dominant power of the sun. For it is not credible that the human mind failed to perceive, from the very earliest time, the traces of supremely intelligent design (the first observed bee-hive must have settled the question), and did not ever look from nature up to nature's God.[2] If indeed, the idea of God be not innate, and surely conscience must be, it must have been very early contracted from without. Practically, it comes to the same thing. Some happy communities enjoyed many centuries of security. They cherished oral traditions of their origin, which the mellowing chiaroscuro of time converted into myths of surpassing grace and beauty. Those who had lost

[1] And these would be brought together by further migrations and mutations, whence the origin of so-called different gods in the same land.

[2] Pope.

all mental record of their primal exodus, and their arrival upon the seashore or on some contiguous island, asserted themselves to be veritable children of Ocean. Others, seated from time immemorial in some teeming valley, that they had sprung, like their primæval foliage, from the loving soil itself. Such oases were the earliest cradles of settled forms of faith and of legislation, of science and of art. The genuine nomad, like the Arab, is a nomad still. It cannot be allowed that the original ape had latent within him any possibilities of thought in the direction of civilisation. Simial communities and colonies build no temples to Neptune or the Sun, design no ships, found no commerce nor political constitutions. The brain-power and fecundity of mind characteristic of Man germinated in no father of the Simiadæ. Howbeit, the myths and traditions of peoples became sacred, and the peculiar charge of the gods, whence the rise of established forms of religion, but never the monkeys, to whom they were wont to trace their dynasties; the supreme Unseen authority becoming sponsor for the Seen. So ought it to have been, so has it been from the first, and ever will remain. It was the reason and conscience of mankind which were the true unostensible lawgivers; and there was never any civilised society, probably never any society at all worthy of the name, where

God was not. For it is, in fact, only by the observance of His laws that states live, move, and have their national being;[1] and when they forego it, they disappear, and become as a tale that is told. A really godless nation is an impossibility; and, destitute of reason and conscience, humanity would to the present day have been no better off than the gorilla. Man, then, is not the child of some preternatural simiad; but, inasmuch as upon man alone of all the creatures of whom He is in a general sense the Parent, He has bestowed mind, an emanation of the Divine Intellect—of God.

However many steps and processes, therefore, may be interposed, whether twenty or twenty thousand, the inevitable conclusion remains, that God, an All-intelligent Being, made man; and, as we think, that he was of a distinct and independent origin, standing in no need of disentanglement from any lower line of creatures, nor requiring to be dragged with difficulty out of the ape. We may speculate and dilate upon assumed gradation as a series of acts, or we may sum these together as one deed of creation, time being of no import to an Eternal Maker, but the result remains the same. That this Supreme Being is benevolent and beneficent, and that He is as wise as He is powerful, Nature un-

[1] Canon Kingsley.

answerably attests. Besides which, Man's whole conformation leads him to ascribe all moral perfection to God, and to deny all imperfection of Him. 'And this will for ever be a practical proof of His moral character to such as will consider what a practical proof is.'[1] That He is invisible, and does not by means observable to the senses communicate with man, inasmuch as He designed once for all self-acting machinery of amazing powers of life and regularity, which He constantly sustains and tends, in no way derogates from the fact of His existence, which men moreover do not see, but feel. It is needless here to recapitulate the many beautiful and convincing arguments which have been worked out by gifted minds upon the proof from design, as in the *Bridgewater Treatises*. Their advantage is, that they depend upon immutable facts, and upon no human record or tradition however august. Natural religion lends its sanction to the doctrine of what is termed Revealed, that the universe and all that therein is were created by the Almighty. With regard to details as to the order and the periods of the formation of the world, views based upon eternal fact must prevail over the most sublimely propounded theories. That there could be solar days before the birth of the sun is an impossi-

[1] Bishop Butler, *Analogy*.

bility; that the earth was herself formed before she was clad, is but in accord with reason, but we cannot think she had to borrow her raiment, and that, too, from accident. It is not a fair contention that the Biblical account pretends to be more than a collection of the traditions prevalent at the period at which it was compiled, and therefore it must be exonerated from any imputation of wilful misstatement. Man in those days, as in these, could but speculate upon the origin of the world according to his light, and that he had then any correct idea of cosmogony [1] is contrary to the truth. Even later he was but an astrologer, and thought that the stars in their courses fought against the Siseras of his dislike or of his fears, and an astrologer he remained even till the dawn of modern wisdom. There are, indeed, some few who sigh for the return of moral darkness and idle wonder, but the benumbing sovereignty of these twin children of night is for ever and for ever ended.

Wherefore, whether physically or ethically viewed, the Divine *primum* and *eternum mobile* acts ever in the direction of the resultant of what to man, incapable of grasping their infinite scope and perduration, appears only the dead equilibrium of immutable

[1] Consult *Essays and Reviews*—the *Septem pro Deo.*

powers and laws: whence many have erroneously come to deem that God, as was formerly held of this world of His, is a mere passive and motionless Being —a symbolical king of a chess universe in a sublime but helpless condition of perpetual checkmate. But that is a mere illusion, like the one with which it is here compared, and is equally answered by the imperishable words of Galileo, *E pur si muove.* And in Him also we move and have our being, and His alone is the gift of life and the glory of created mind.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HEBREW IDEAL.

THE revelation of the Almighty in the structure of the universe and the operations of nature must then be of at least as high authority as that contained in any record, or handed down by any oral tradition. When, for instance, the Bible unintentionally implies, for the authors were at no time laying down astronomical lore, that the sun moves round the earth, or that the earth and the moon once stood still, or that the rainbow ever glowed independent of invariable causes, it cannot be accepted as speaking in accordance with eternal fact. But although it would be unfair upon this ground to impute to the Biblical author conscious untruth, since he was honestly accounting for (it may be) certain appearances or optical illusions, to the best of his knowledge; the Almighty, nevertheless, could have made no error at all in anything in regard of which He inspired, or inspires, ancient or modern writers, seers, priests, poets, or philosophers. In this case, then, where

lies the true revelation? He has Himself provided it for us through the observation and teaching of nature.[1] Man had but to exert the reason bestowed upon him to discover the truth. Nor does even the connection between His physical and moral laws appear to us so obscure as many have maintained. It is at least certain, for the proofs everywhere surround us, that misunderstanding of the former leads to dangerous neglect of the latter. Persons who persist in asserting that the Scriptural narrative *must* in this and similar cases be true, go merely to weaken the respect in which it should be held upon the many points wherein it *is* true. No doubt men, not so very long ago, believed that the world was flat, and quite recently that comets shook pestilence from their shining trains. Again, the Bible occasionally revels in very sublime imagery pourtraying the Creator as a destroyer. He rides upon storms and whirlwinds, and rejoices over the annihilation of His enemies after mocking them when their fear cometh. He is likened to a devouring fire. He is made to hound on the Israelites to the slaughter, and to slay all the firstborn of Egypt, and the whole Assyrian army in a night. It were needless to multiply instances. These things are, as poetry, grand and sometimes beautiful, but they

[1] It is not likely that God would affect to specially reveal what was already there under man's eyes and wits, if he chose but to use them.

are inconsistent with the character of the Almighty, since He cannot be as we have Him represented —jealous, vindictive, and even furious.

He is made to turn Lot's wife into salt; to bless the fraud of Jacob;[1] to approve the cruel treatment of Agag by Samuel; to offer David the choice of divers disasters to be inflicted on his people for his own private sin; to tear up forty-two children by means of a she-bear (the very sex is noted) for ridiculing a prophet for his baldness. He is said to strike Uzzah[2] dead for a mere piece of curiosity; to abet all through the merciless proceedings of the Jews, and constantly suspend the course and constitution of nature to favour their covetous designs. Such is the general Biblical sketch of an assumed caliph of the universe. Granting the grandeur and intensely 'sensational' character of the imagery, the question remains can these things be reconciled with the right idea of God? Has He ever suspended, does He ever suspend His laws; or, if he desired to

[1] This was probably the cause of the general disparagement of elder sons from Cain and Esau down to Absalom.

[2] *One* man suffices—but refer to the incident at Bethshemesh of Judah—the execution, for a similar offence, of 50,070 men. Who counted the plague-stricken bodies? The survivors naturally lament, but get rid of the ark, that movable volcano, as soon as possible. Strange to say, it does not resent the expulsion, but quietly relapses into the slumber from which it awoke to commit this terrible massacre. The inspired cattle, too, which brought it to Bethshemesh, are quite of a piece with the rest of the fable.

do so, is it not in accordance with sound reason to presume, that He would only thus act for some proportionate end? Nothing is more remarkable or more beautiful than the exact adaptation of means to ends to be observed in the government of the world. There is no error, no waste, no confusion, no breaking of flies upon wheels. Much indeed has been attempted to be justified by the Jews' own assertion —for it rests on no independent evidence—that they were a chosen people. Perpetually attributing their national crimes to a god, whom, even when they had thus bodied forth after their own heart, they as perpetually rejected; enslaved in Egypt; deported by Assyria; nearly destroyed by Rome; the majority early lost, the minority for ever scattered: is this evidence of a preference so strong as to justify the stoppage of all the heavenly systems to throw light upon one of their massacres? We are constrained then to assert the dignity of the character of God against such idle imputations.

It is true the present age is by no means free from making similar charges. Nations go to war, and alternately sing *Te Deum* to a 'god of battles,' praising indeed Moses, Odin, Thor—whom you will; but assuredly not the Universal Father, to whom the pæan of destruction is analogous to an insult. Now men pray to Him for rain, and now for fine

weather (which if indeed needed in one district, might be injurious to another), but these come and go in obedience to laws He has unalterably fixed from the beginning, and which no amount of prayer may suffice to change. Think you it would not rain in England though there were not a man or animal alive upon its surface? So also we beseech Him to keep away plague, and all the while neglect the employment of due preventive means. Might He not well ask,—

> Τίνας ποθ' ἕδρας τάσδ' Ἐμοὶ θοάζετε
> Ἱκτηρίοις κλάδοισιν ἐξεστεμμένοι;[1]

and say, 'I have given you sense and resources to contend against these things, and you sit idly bemoaning yourselves, or come here petitioning? You ask Me for angels? They are already in yourselves. To labour is to pray. Make clean alike your hearts and your bodies and your homes and streets, and come not whining to Me to condone your disrespect of My eternal ordinances. You can often, by the fullest observance of My laws of which you are capable, preserve your great and your rich; save also your poor and your miserable.' Is it not a crime against God to deliberately despatch rotten, unseaworthy ships from our ports, and then ironically pray to

[1] *Œdipus Rex.*

Him to muzzle the savage winds for the safety of the crews? To send out missionaries in the cabin to pervert—for so sometimes has it befallen—the heathen to the errors of our ways, yet stow the hold full of Birmingham idols for him to buy and worship? To go even to war—leaving aside the question of going at all—with disorderly, ill-provided undisciplined legions—and kneel in ten thousand churches to importunate Him for victory? To hymn in His name the triumph of some unjust and oppressive cause? or to thank Him for the successful murder of enough Chinese to terrify the remainder into poisoning themselves with opium? All these things have been done, are done daily somewhere in some shape or other, all over the world, and that with immensely greater interests at stake than ever accrued to the Hebrew migrations; but does He appear in storms, with all the exciting paraphernalia of celestial tragedy, to avenge them? No. What does He then? He leaves these foolish deeds to bear their inevitable fruit in agreement with His established laws—as indeed, He has ever done; but neither now appears, nor ever did appear, in the shape of an angry divine kind of Tamerlane to anyone, at any time; the contrary is a mere figment of the thousand and one nights of the credulous Arabian imagination.

Yet another point. Oriental tales delight in pourtraying the kings of the East as constantly addicted to masquerade. The same may be said of exoteric heathen mythology with regard to the gods. It is to a similar tendency that is owing the alleged personal appearance of the Almighty in the Scriptures; and men are invited to believe that He entered into colloquy with prophets and patriarchs, wrangled with Moses, and wrestled with Jacob. Is it, indeed, conceivable that He ever 'spoke' to Moses at all; condescended to give personal instructions about images, declaring, that He, forsooth, was 'jealous' of them; or was in the habit of specially visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children? That is to say, that if a man made the figure-head of a ship to bow down to it, or a regimental flag to salute, He would expressly punish his child for it? It is no question here of hereditary taints of vice. That He ever 'wrote' anything with His 'finger' at all? That He re-asserted the Mosaic account of the creation, actually assigning the seven 'days' as solar days,[1] which is known by His own revelation in nature not to be true? That the Omnipresent travelled about with the Hebrews in the shape of a cloud or pillar of

[1] On the seventh it would appear He 'rested and *was refreshed*'—but can God be the subject of weariness?

fire, or both combined—the Omniscient desired to hear Moses' report of the people, or found it necessary to personally settle with man the articles of the Decalogue, and could not dispense with tables of stone, nor save them from fracture—the Omnipotent was obliged to return ever so many times to the charge in encountering Pharaoh's right regal impassibility—suspending the natural laws all round, and even stooping to enter upon a trial of comparative magic—in which His first achievement is equalled—with the soothsayers of Egypt, the granitic monarch remaining almost as unconcerned as his own obelisks at all this violence—and turning the waters to blood, but not, so far as we are informed, turning them back again into water? Yet this must have been done, though blood could as easily have been made to defy the laws of gravitation, as the purer element, and would have set quite as effectual a trap for the pursuing army. All these things are utterly inconsistent with the attributes of an omnipresent, omnipotent Being—just as many, alas too many, others are with those of an all-benevolent, just, true, and merciful One.

Such and so great however He is, and has ever been—as at length this age, though but imperfectly, perceives by means of the powers He has bestowed upon us, now at last unfettered at any rate in

English liberty. By His own exalted standard it is our duty to endeavour to try all and any accounts that have come down to us, even those presuming or presumed to give a positive, final, and authoritative declaration of the character of our common Father. Why in this case only should men take a book upon its own estimate of its merits? Whatever the Bible asserts contrary to this test cannot but be rejected, whatever in concurrence retained. Mankind has far more right to amend these errors than ever it had to adopt them. But go on teaching children disparaging fables, and how can you expect any outcome of true religion? What child does not very early come to perceive the discrepancy between the monstrous she-bear falsehood and 'Suffer little children to come unto Me?' What youth does not notice that the jealousy, the wrath, the destructiveness assigned to the Almighty in the Old Testament, are utterly dissonant from the principles of the New? We are, in fact, trying to teach two antagonistic religions, and foolishly expending an immense amount of labour to prove that they ever did or can be harmonised. God, as depicted in the Older Record, is, apart from the grandeur and sublimity of the poem, only the deified national character of the ancient Jews.

But notwithstanding the general opinion here ex-

pressed, we are by no means unmindful of the fact, that from this Semitic race He at length arose Who bequeathed the world the true spiritual portrait of God the Saviour. Human nature in Him protested against the long Mosaic schooling by the rod. The ever-abiding principles of divine ethics, apparently somewhat decentralised before His era, were in Him fully concentrated and manifested with a power Time will never improve upon. Nor have we any *arrière pensée* aiming by implication at the modern Hebrews, a people of singular habits of order and placability, and who have proved their education in many spheres, ranging all the way from high commerce to music. Add also the fine arts and philosophy: assuredly, the profound capacity of Bartholdy and the very soul of Harmony which dwelt in his gifted grandson Mendlessohn never took their rise either in the cerebral convolutions of any very ancient and fishlike animal, nor in principles ruling the power of sound[1] left dormant in some incomplete simiad, to which the existing gorilla, both in respect of outward form and of inward feeling, must be accounted quite an Apollo Belvidere. And indeed, could either of these creatures have even imagined so beautiful a god, or

[1] Spohr, by the way, rightly named one of his finest works *Die Weihe der Töne.*

have intuitively perceived the fine allegory[1] in which the rays of the sun of intellect become arrows, for ever glancing from the heaven of pure mind, to inflict incurable wounds upon monsters of ignorance, as from time to time they surge laboriously upward from the deep womb of night, and, stricken, sink back again but to die?

[1] For the true meaning of the Greek mythology, see *The Wisdom of the Ancients*, by the great Lord Bacon.

CHAPTER VII.

NATIONAL PREDILECTION.

MEN have, indeed, ever been greatly disposed to ascribe to their gods, their heroes, and their mythical dynasties, like passions and predilections with themselves. Ordinarily, a man's estimate of any other being whatever will rarely, and in fact cannot well reach beyond the grasp of his own mind. So, also, with regard to nations. The prevalent characteristic of a popular temperament is certain to figure largely in the historic deities or demigods. A combative people will probably choose out of all its long line of departed kings the most martial and chivalrous upon whom it can light, to erect, like Cœur-de-Lion, as a statue even at the doors of Parliament. It will select the most powerful, pugnacious, or aspiring animal as its material emblem, like the lion, the game-cock, or the eagle. It will eagerly seize, like Cromwell, upon the warlike and vindictive characteristics of the Old Testament, and speedily assimilate them. It will snatch, with prescient ardour,

'the sword of the Lord and of Gideon.' It will extract 'religious' consolation for injuries it may for the time be powerless to requite, from the reflection that 'Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, I will repay it.' Such, indeed, is the strength, or rather the want of control, of a nevertheless essential principle, τὸ θυμούμενον, in the human constitution, that violence has been and still is partly deified in all nations. It remains an eternal honour to the Athenians, whom St. Paul carps at as having erected an altar to the Unknown God (thereby at least exhibiting their tolerance), that they alone had reared a mighty temple to Divine Wisdom, as did Ephesus to Divine Purity. But there is nothing to show that the mighty Apostle had even attempted to sound the depths of the Greek intellect which still ideally commands, and to which the Hebrew was in no practical respect at all comparable. He therefore was content to dismiss their religion, which he took no pains to investigate, with something like a sneer. Yet it is certain that the Greek estimate of God,[1] taken altogether, was a better one than that of ancient Judaism. Nevertheless, Paul upon Socrates and Plato would have been an inestimable legacy to mankind, more valuable even than Paul before Festus,

[1] *Gods of Greece.*—Schiller.

of which interview the tremeficent reasonings were unfortunately not reported.

The Jews, with certain most noble exceptions, who nearly all, like the Last and Greatest, yet ever First, came to violent ends, being either lapidated, or even perchance, like Isaiah, sawn asunder, on account of the truthfulness of their 'hallowed lips,'[1] were an ignorant, jealous, and vindictive people. To God, therefore, have they ascribed their ignorance, their pride, and their fury; their cunning and blind ferocity. What could be more cruel than the relentless extermination they practised, yet deliberately attributed to express Divine command, pitiless to the last in spite of all the monition of adversity? Their want of mercy wears a more terrible aspect because for them death meant annihilation, as they had no belief in spiritual futurity. Their historical books teem with savagery. Even the Psalms, in many respects so pathetic and so beautiful, are replete with curses and maledictions, which we ridiculously go on repeating to each other in public, like candidates in a competitive examination for lunacy. And yet, forsooth, people are to be told in these days, that they are to have no God at all, or to be accused of not believing in any, if they show

[1] 'And touched his hallowed lips with fire.'—Milton, *Paradise Lost.*

themselves discontented with the image the Jews set up, clothed with the terrors of their own imagination, and resent the libels on the Divine Character still publicly circulated, and taught upon authority. Alas, that the perpetual reading of the melancholy and blood-dipped history of ancient priestcraft came ever to be inflicted upon the English people! Such, however, has been the tyranny, first of churches, and then of custom the nurse and too often curse of nations. But if there were no better light to be had than that afforded by the kind of divinity[1] celebrated in the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, it would be preferable to restore the Parthenon (to which and to the fane of Herod the Temple of Solomon was but a hut), and re-establish the worship of Divine Wisdom, at any rate one certain and undefiled attribute of God.

For in what great quality was Judæa to be compared with Egypt, or with Greece more truly than Moses her foster-child? The Jews were profoundly ignorant of art. In their palmiest days they borrowed the architect of the very Temple from the Phœnicians, as in the earlier times Moses borrowed his learning from the masters whom he disparages.

[1] Often putting many to death, but teaching no one the doctrine of immortality.

Design was hardly known to them in its higher forms, though elsewhere studied and applied with success. At any rate, architecture lived at Tyre. The Greeks always had perceived that there was an Intelligent First Cause underlying creation. They adored God in His attributes; as Jupiter, for instance, for His power, Minerva, truly virgin, for His pure intelligence. No one ever has supposed that they, in any case, worshipped their own marble. They created a language fit for godlike mind, for Sophocles, and for Plato. So profound was their veneration, so pure the wellspring of thought from which they drew ideas of heavenly beauty, that it has imparted an immortal tone and expression to their sculpture, which even all subsequent ages, with scarce an exception,[1] have failed to equal, for we think less nobly of our God. The calm of eternal majesty broods over the statues of their divinities. Where are to be discovered petulancy in the features of Zeus, vindictiveness in the passionless countenance of Athenè, umbrage on the bright front of

> the Lord of the unerring bow,
> The God of life, and poesy, and light,
> The sun in human limbs arrayed, and brow
> All radiant—?[2]

Moses would have embodied his dire imaginings

[1] Say the age of the Medici and of Buonarotti.
[2] Byron.

in wrinkled shapes of frowns and anger; but the Greek appreciation of what ought to be divine qualifications was far sounder, finer, and grander, than any entertained by him who created the Tormentor of Pharaoh. Yet he must have been aware both of the monotheism and the pure moral teaching of the Egyptians. Were not the men of Egypt and of Greece, with the vast and fruitful duration of their reign, with the inestimable mental harvests sprung from the overflow of the Nile of intellect, which they garnered for all time, and the power and dignity to which they elevated human intelligence, every whit as much a chosen people as the Hebrews? Are the nations of to-day any less so? Verily, God has never been absent, much less dead. The theory of the special preference of the Israelite has hardly the phantom of a basis. The evidence of fact lies all the other way; unless, indeed, a hypothesis which would well harmonise with Moses' conception of a destructive God, they were selected for destruction. But it was this very hateful element in their creed that, clashing with everlasting truth, prevented their development, and attracted congenial ruin from without. It was the false idea of the Almighty's attributes implanted in them by their despotic prophet,[1] no

[1] He quarrelled with the serene mind of Egypt, as calm and pure as her climate, and built up a passionate code in opposition.

doubt as an individual incarnate majesty,[1] and growing with their growth, which was the cancer of their national life, and which yet England seeks to borrow from them still. Theirs was complete intellectual stagnation. To think other thoughts, to say other things than the Elders was death from first to last, and so as a rule would the like kind of presbyters always have it to be. Science had, of course, no scope where theological and theocratic finality of the most tyrannical description pervaded and benumbed every movement of life. Plastic art was expressly forbidden them under the preposterous menace of Divine jealousy. As for literature, who would expect it to germinate in such a very 'killing frost?'[2] But Greece happily had no Moses to seal up her dawning national spirit and intellect in a casket as narrow, and sunk as deep, as that in which Solomon is fabled to have imprisoned the Djins. She, like her foster-mother, would doubtless have cast both the rod and the serpent out of her bosom, all threatened plagues and punishments notwithstanding, for the Greek mind dreaded no miracles, and would have smiled them all away. And later, the higher and purer genius of the heathen and the alien better appreciated the Light that had come

[1] Michael Angelo's statue of him excels in this trait.

[2] Cardinal Wolsey, in the divine Shakespeare's *Henry VIII.*

into the world. The schools of Alexandria did much to encourage Christianity. The rays which had shone forth were not all novel, although Jesus consciously borrowed them from no man, but surrounded with fresh glory pre-existing truth. They illumined the cavernous recesses of Hebrew theology, and revealed but a vast and hollow sepulchre, the haunt of a moody and repelling Dæmon. And we are to be told that the men who adopted Christianity were not of God, but that they were who rejected it and mocked and crucified its Author. If we must then listen to ancient history every Sunday, since we 'cannot choose but hear,'[1] read us not, except it be for warning, that of the most stubborn and benighted nation which ever existed on the earth.

The reason that the religious instruction of the many advances so slowly in England is, that we persist in trying to uphold two conflicting codes of morality, two hostile spirits of faith. It is time to make a final choice between Moses and Jesus. All the special pleading in the world will never succeed in showing the concordance of opposite poles of thought. Children are mostly terrified by Moses and whipped by Solomon, before they approach Christ at all. Most of them not unnaturally stop short at the second stage. This is pure fatuity.

[1] Coleridge.

With the slender pains that is taken, and little power of exposition common to the run of our teachers, whose minds have already been hopelessly confused or debilitated by undergoing the binary process, the Mosaic element has it all its own way. The terrific drama exercises a marvellous fascination and colours all the juvenile mind with the glare of its crimson pyrotechny. There is, as Buckle has observed, a telling proof of this in Scottish theology, a certain phase of which is the most vindictive anti-science extant. Whereas children ought, if taught from them at all, to be instructed that the Mosaic books are full of fable, to have pointed out to them how inconsistent they are with reason, science and Christianity; we demand their belief in them, not indeed, *sub tegmine fagi*, but under the shade of the ever-impending birch. It is especially the children of the poor who are thus victimised. But as their class cannot provide for themselves, they are constrained to take what instruction they can get; which is mostly of ancient Bible history,[1] *plus* the wonderful and fearful commentaries of Sunday[2] and National-school teachers. But where the means have existed

[1] Disrespectful tales about God stain 'religious' school-books, and even creep into geographies.

[2] The volunteer element is a shifting sand: sometimes three out of nine teachers stay away, and the classes have to be shifted accordingly, to the despair of the clergy.

common sense has long since provided a very powerful antidote to the deleterious spells of Judaism, by training in classical languages and literature, which all lovers of freedom whether of mind or body should resolutely uphold; and in the nearer, truer, and more instructive histories of Greece and Rome. The example of men who have wafted upon such studies to the summit of an Olympus of influence, from which they seek to thunderstrike the foster-parents of their powers, is by no means worthy of imitation. Yet there is little danger of this: there live not many so able so to rise. But to abolish Greek and Latin learning is to begin to overwhelm the intellectual freedom of the future. Now, if the Hebrew Testament, with the exception of a few illustrious books, do not render or reflect a faithful image of God, it does not, beyond certain superb poetry and pathetic tales, otherwise afford anything worthy of the authoritative sphere it has occupied; the English version, however, will ever remain a supreme treasury of our potent language.[1]

And what is the common sense of mankind, but the first-born of Reason? It is not only in the building of the universe that the Allwise has revealed Himself, but in the intelligence He has

[1] Which, according to Douglas Jerrold, is contained in the Holy Bible and Shakespeare.

bestowed upon man.[1] The power and range of individual mind are so strikingly out of proportion with the duration of individual life, that this one fact goes far to suggest the existence of another and a higher sphere hereafter. Man is probably at a stage, not the final one, of his ordained cycle of mutation, but not here, and not into another animal, nor will he ever burst a resplendent monkey in the blaze of day.[2] Even as it is, the brevity of our mortal span is greatly compensated—at any rate, since means have been enjoyed of storing mental results and creating mental capital—by the *quasi*-immortality of humanity at large. Man, therefore, in this sense never dies. But human reason has clearly always recognised, with difference only in the strength and purity of the degree, the existence of its Maker—in

> every age adored,
> Jehovah, Jove, or Lord.

No statement can be more in point, nor more true than this of Pope, whom there are, in these days, too many silly seasons in the year, and too many worshippers of rhymed obscurity, to any longer suitably appreciate. But there are many who appear to imagine that the Hebrew Scriptures enjoy a

[1] See Bishop Sanderson, *De obligatione conscientiæ.*

[2] 'And burst a seraph in the blaze of day.'—*Rogers.*

monopoly of the Idea of God, which in truth in various aspects they obscure—persons who claim faith in the infallibility of the Bible, as the distinctive feature of Protestantism. But this is as bad as the infallibility of the Pope, nay worse, for he at any rate has life, and not seldom reason.[1] But how can the Bible be infallible? There is both scientific and moral error in Scripture. Is it to be pretended that the Almighty would proffer a confused, an indistinct, an erroneous account of His own work, or impute to Himself trivial and questionable actions? If, indeed, the Bible be an unfailing guide, how come there to exist some hundred or so different sects, between whom it is powerless to arbitrate? What they really claim is the infallibility of each man's private judgment and interpretation.[2] Some have, indeed, made not a golden, but a printed image of the Bible, and for these little is wanting but a shrine and a hierarchy—which latter would unquestionably be sacerdotally robed like Aaron, and be hard upon sheep—to set it up in the place of Him whom they claim to be its Author. Nevertheless, it is but a passive instrument, which has been more twisted into conflicting shapes than any other in

[1] The world is enormously indebted to Leo X.

[2] See Bishop Bossuet, the grand orator of the time of King Louis XIV.

existence, and often made the lever to the most frightful deeds in history. It is a consolation that, wrench it how you will, it never fails to give forth a certain fragrance, as of Araby the Blest, from the strained and sundering fibres, to compensate a little for the lethal odour of seas of innocent blood. From how much of horror would this world have been preserved, if the baleful conviction of a vindictive and avenging Deity had never been forced upon the primitive droves of man! In point of evidence, the greatest proof of the untruth of the Mosaic theory is that society has survived the desolation which this dire misapprehension brought with it in its train, and in the most enlightened centres worships the very name of the sublime Man who triumphantly withstood the moral and intellectual plague in its own stronghold and, for an absolute fact, was assassinated, paying with His life-blood for the disenthralment of the human mind, being thus verily and indeed a Redeemer.

CHAPTER VIII.

MOSES.

Now, in regard to the acts of Moses, the precautions he took in slaying the Egyptian and concealing the body—'and he looked this way and that way, and when he saw there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand'—prove that it was at any rate a deliberate act. The antique king then would have had some show of reason in regarding it as a murder, as Moses feared he might. The kings of these days would be of the same opinion; at least it is doubtful whether they would class it with deeds of justifiable political violence as claimed, in a fenian sense, for the atrocious crime at Manchester. But the motive was probably a much stronger one than is related, for this great Man and Lawgiver himself denounces murder, and had besides been rescued,[1] nurtured, and trained by Pharaoh's daughter or some compassionate Noble-

[1] Contemplate 'Jochebed' and many other beautiful pictures of this pathetic incident. Why are we all so ungrateful to Egypt?

woman. It is clear then, while we must not hastily accuse Moses of ingratitude, that charitable feelings had once existed at a court which he depicts as the abode of the devil.[1] Nevertheless, the mighty Seer, with all his majesty, and notwithstanding his authorship of the Decalogue, betrays some imperfect conceptions in the character he attributes to One who shall here be nameless, although He is what He is.

Consider, for instance, the spoiling of the Egyptians. The Hebrews were invited to borrow during submission, in order to rob under cover of rebellion. Or were the conditions really those of war? Again, 'I am sure the king of Egypt will not let you go.' 'I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go.' What, then, can be the true interpretation of the subsequent persecution? Is there not some needless vanity in the passage, 'Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you (in order) that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt;' or appearance of cruelty in the infliction of the plagues upon innocent people? Moreover, 'When I see the blood, I will pass over you,' are these the words of Omnipotence?

[1] The devotional treatises tend to prove that the Egyptian religion was, in its inmost signification, one of pure monotheism. In the hymns now exhumed after an interment of 5,000 years humility, honesty, obedience, benevolence, and other Christian virtues are incessantly inculcated. *Prolegomena of Ancient History*, &c.: see *ante*, p. 8.

Can Infinite Mercy prove so embittered against not only children, but the first-born of cattle, which, latter instance is, in view of the dignity of God, purely incomprehensible? Then also, 'I will get me honour upon Pharaoh[1] and upon all his host.' What was the king of Egypt, that he should be challenged to fight a duel by Almighty God, and confer renown upon Him by accepting the gage of battle? The taking off the chariot-wheels so that they 'drave heavily,' the legitimate inference being that they might otherwise have escaped in spite of the miracle of the waters, suggests somewhat of doubt and feebleness. And further, 'Charge the people lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze, lest the Lord break forth upon them;'—is not this a sketch of a veritable dragon? It is difficult, too, to conceive the Almighty dictating the details of the Mosaic upholstery and haberdashery, from the fittings of the ark to 'curtains of goats' hair, coverings of rams' skin, veils of blue, purple and scarlet,' coats for Aaron and his sons, &c.; appointing a ransom of souls for money at a shekel and a half per head, or in any manner exhibiting delight in human agony and terror. After this—and

[1] The King throughout remains as majestic, calm and resolute as Victorian law and order in the presence of fenianism; the God of Moses is all irritability and wounded *amour propre*.

it cannot be refuted, unless indeed these books do not rightly represent the otherwise grand mind of Moses, or he was hampered by the profound ignorance of his people—might it not fairly be said, that he who asserts that God made man after his image has endeavoured rather to make God after his own? The whole of the circumstances are, according to present light, of a derogatory character. They are quite unable to bear the test of either moral or scientific examination. Like long-buried corpses, the moment the fresh free air touches them, they crumble into dust; and yet are accepted by many on the very ground of being contrary to reason, on the *credo quia impossibile* principle; the veritable Possumus of folly—as if indeed, the mere avoidance of reason in this history were not, *per se*, one of the strongest of arguments in proof that it is not to be attributed to God.

Let us briefly re-examine the Mosaic version of the Exodus; though we suspect the truth to have been, not that the king would not let the Israelites *go*, but that he would not let that turbulent people *stay*. They had, therefore, to account for their dismissal. Moses demands permission for the Israelites to depart from Egypt, but meets with a refusal; because, as we are told, God had expressly hardened Pharaoh's heart. The rejection of the

petition then is clearly God's act, not the king's. Notwithstanding this self-evident conclusion, the Omnijust is represented as inflicting non-natural calamities, not, in the first instance, upon the monarch, but upon his people. How truly Oriental is this notion of the people being the abject personal chattels of their master to be harried for his annoyance! We have a later monstrous case in the pestilence inflicted upon David's animated goods, whose enormous crime consisted, poor things, in having *nolentes volentes* been enumerated—the king had actually dared to have the census taken. What will become of us all? To resume. Now, as the Omniscient must have known that Pharaoh's heart was closed by His own act, to what reasonable purpose is all the subsequent display, comprising the invention of destroying angels and special retributory lice—the extreme notes of the diapason of instrumental vengeance? What had the firstborn to do with the royal obstinacy? Nothing at all, notwithstanding they are all angelically murdered. What was the concern of the cattle in the alleged crime? Still nothing, yet express hailstones are provided for their slaughter. The Israelites are very naturally pursued for the recovery of the stolen goods, but the Omnijust, having been first represented as organising theft, is next made to abet the escape of the plunderers. Let us

take an example at home, and conceive, if we can, all the eldest born of Normandy or of England having been afflicted with sudden death as a punishment for the hardness of heart of one of their kings, say of him who made the New Forest into an unhappy hunting-ground, by the destruction of the homes of the Saxons—or let us attribute the plague and fire of London to the amours of Charles II. Again, even on the Mosaic view of Divine justice, ought it not to be expected that the same power which massacres the guilty innocents in the time of Pharaoh would have preserved the innocent Innocents in the time of Herod?

The most, then, that can be accepted—if there be any truth in the story of the plagues at all[1]—is that the Israelites took advantage of some natural convulsion, storm, flood, earthquake, what you will, to abscond. The premeditated pillage of the household and personal ornaments goes far, too, to show that they departed furtively. It was, if not an expulsion, a burglarious exit, a gigantic piece of housebreaking from within. The account constitutes a superbly dramatic poem worthy of the unrivalled music[2] to which it has been set, but the circumstances in no way harmonise with the Divine Character. All the

[1] Has Mr. Mahaffy discovered any corroboration of these alleged occurrences?

[2] *Israel in Egypt*, Handel; *Mosè in Egitto*, Rossini.

poetry and all the song in the world will never suffice to atone for a defamatory representation of the Most High—of infinite Love and Mercy throwing themselves into a terrific paroxysm of blind unreasoning fury and setting alike the eternal principles of goodness, and the eternal laws of nature, at utter defiance.

But even the more enlightened Biblical authors express other sentiments. 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice.' 'Think ye that I delight in the blood of bulls and rams?' and lambs—and why not men, then? Nothing can be more trivial than the supposition that the Omniscient or His angel could not discriminate between Jew and Egyptian, without blood sprinkled upon doorposts, and, in particular, lamb's blood. All these things might have served to impose upon the primitive people whom Moses and others endeavoured to govern by inventing machinery of unnatural pretensions to inspire fear; but is it less than monstrous, to teach them for *truth* to the children of the present age? But that is a question for the School-boards. The figment of the appeasement of Divine 'wrath' by shedding of the blood of sheep, is only surpassed in foolishness by that other, which laid the sins of the people upon some unlucky goat, described as carrying them away into the wilderness like a parcel delivery, and there left to perish. Even so, persons raging after 'types' do not shrink

from the confusion of making the abhorred goat emblematical of Christ—the sacred Lamb. Whenever may be encountered something more preposterous than usual, it is always mysteriously said to be 'typical'—which generally signifies, not to be understood in any sense the human mind can apply to it. What may be the advantage of the symbolical method? The best thing ever obtained from the scapegoat is Mr. Hunt's extraordinary picture. It is obvious that the choice of a lamb for this purpose would, considering ovine *status*, have been too strong even for that most gullible people. But what to the Creator is goat more or less than sheep, sheep than goat? 'Mine is the cattle upon a thousand hills,' aye, and on all hills and in all valleys. On what then rests the idea that led the Jewish rulers to bestow upon the sheep a general proxy and power of attorney in behalf of goodness? Clearly the helplessness and submissiveness of the animal, these being most consonant with the qualities requisite in their subjects—whom, in true Oriental style, they treated like sheep and sometimes sent to the shambles by the thousand. Would any major or minor prophet of these days like to apply the method to the British people? No doubt our seers and sires once did so in the days of despotic divine right of rulers—and not far from our squires and spires some few uphold the doctrine still—and therein lies the motive that

for centuries the multitude have been drugged with Moses. Be that as it may, it is certain that, as the founder and perpetually authorised indoctrinator of the 'right' of governments to inflict arbitrary punishment and taxation, he cost those personally estimable kings, Charles I. and Louis XVI. their heads, James II. his throne, good George III.[1] his reason, and England America. God grant that he may not put us to a yet more startling expenditure, or, like the deadly carbonic acid gas, generate a fatal national explosion from below!

Current literature,[2] and oratory often show themselves pervaded by the Old Testament temper. Pulpit teachings of fear and fury set in with great severity on a recent most happy occasion, and one not at all suitable for their parade. One military sermon, for instance, laid it down for the instruction of Mars, that storms, fire, and deluges (escape from nature's safety-valves, and therefore of a mainly beneficent tendency), are sent for the punishment of sin, with which they have *in fact* no more to do than Tenterden steeple with Goodwin Sands. The highest *Christian* authority, however, tells us that rain at

[1] The principal founder of the British Museum Library—'a thing of beauty and a joy for ever.'

[2] See some fine lines in a recent number of *Blackwood*, 'The Desolation of Jerusalem,' and compare with the Sermon on the Mount, and Jesus *passim*.

any rate, and towers as of Siloam, fall alike 'upon the just and the unjust.' Next, it was asserted that God inflicted the typhoid fever on the beloved Prince in a fit of rage, because the English press had recently put forth certain irreligious books! This is but to cast the first stone, for such doctrines manufacture jesting simpletons by the score, since they tend to bring the goodness and justice of God into contempt. We shall next have the prompted soldiery, like the men of Marcellus, slaying some new Archimedes in his observatory. And what can be the reason so many worthy people persist in overlooking the manifestation of God in the genius and sublime skill of the Prince's physicians, His natural agents, in order to seek for it somewhere in the outer air, hovering about in the shape of a dove or some other pennate creature? Truly they seem to think that the everlasting constancy of God's laws, applicable as they are to every possible case, excludes His intelligence from their operations. But the fact is quite the reverse: His mercy is no less mercy because it is perpetual, and they who succumb[1] are equally blest with those who recover,[2] Death and Time being of no import to the all-providing[3] Lord of Life and of Eternity.

[1] Like the royal father. [2] Like the royal son.

[3] Similar epithets frequently recur in this book, but we may venture to plead Homeric precedent.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DIVINE IDEAL.

LET us rest assured that the Father of Lights never did of old what He does not do now. If it had been His custom to avenge the vices of kings with fire, famine, plague inflicted upon their subjects by special interposition, it would, like all His laws, have remained constant in its operation. Constancy has doubtless been their everlasting characteristic; and could we discover the actual origin of Man, it would be found in a reasonable and consistent act or series of acts, with no fits and starts or complication about it throughout, οὔδεν ποίκιλον;[1] and so, we believe, holds the eminent author of protoplasm himself.[2] If again He had been wont to suspend His laws, and occasionally produce preternatural fire, famine, plague, there would have been

[1] Plato. This much-debated word means literally 'many-coloured,' say, like a prism: οὔδεν ποίκιλον then is ordinary light, in which the colours are harmoniously blended and disappear.

[2] For it is precisely some *reasonable* theory of the Creation of which Professor Huxley and Mr. Darwin are in search.

a law of suspension, or of alternation, and laws to control such exceptional pests; a kind of which nothing in the universe affords one single trace. Infinitely greater issues than the Exodus have been decided, during which the operations of nature have been a model of unarmed neutrality. The battle-fields of our days, as of all days, are soon again embrowned with their accustomed harvest. The battles themselves are won by superior number, skill, or discipline—in accordance with His laws. Diseases and conflagrations are preventible—in accordance with His laws. But none of these things, physical or moral, happen, nor, upon sound analogical reasoning, ever did happen outside of His laws.[1] Can there be fire which burns otherwise than by the laws of fire? Were it possible even to conceive the contrary—that is, preternatural fire with preternatural laws of combustion—then that would only happen for the sake of a commensurate end. But it is impossible altogether. For what would be the effect of a suspension of the Divine code governing nature? What must happen, supposing the earth to stand still? Clearly the abrogation of the laws of attraction, repulsion, gravitation. Universal cataclysm.

[1] It is these, alike physical and moral, which are the true 'mirabilia Dei.' The others are purely fantastical.

it becomes incumbent to establish the ideal as nearly in consonance with eternal truth as possible. Of course limited human powers will ever fall far short of adequate appreciation, especially in endeavouring to lay down what He is rather than what He is not. Terms must be employed which are nearly in themselves incomprehensible, but possess major or minor significancy according as the mind is greater or less to which they are addressed, or which itself employs them. The simplest definition to adopt for the words Omniscient and Omnipotent, for instance, is that they at least mean wise and powerful far beyond any limit of wisdom or power attainable by man, whether in thought or fact. The limit of fact is naturally the more clearly observable of the two. The limit of thought will vary as the expansion of minds. Still we may make an appreciative measure to apply to Divine things out of the highest human wisdom, and at once safely reject all qualities attributed to the Divine nature which fall short of that standard. For instance, men are accustomed to ascribe tranquillity to supreme human mind.[1] They reject as unworthy of it all low motives of action, all fruitless processes of working. The revered Church

[1] It is often characteristic too of supreme *persons*, like Her Majesty, the Emperor of Germany, and the Emperor Napoleon, who are notably self-possessed in trying conjunctures.

herself describes the Almighty as being without body, parts, or passions, though she tolerates contrary teaching. Body could not be omnipresent: infinity cannot be divisible: the source of eternal law can neither be impulsive nor variable. Therefore, there can neither be accepted the idea of a localised God, a God composed of definite and divers members, a God liable to rage or to desire, a crafty, a jealous, or a revengeful God. There must be repudiated as discordant with ultimate wisdom, purposes without aim, and performances without issue. We shall dismiss the notion of Eternal Majesty entering upon a Mosaic struggle with one of His own creatures, or retaining bears and lions in His pay as executioners of men. Not for a moment can be entertained the suggestion of caprice, exemplified in the asserted suspension of everliving laws. All Oriental bashaw and Haroun-al-Raschid-like images must go by the board, together with every kind of tinselry and baubledom, for they are totally unworthy of the Subject.[1]

In considering the reports of Divine action which have come down by tradition or record, the following test should be applied: Is such and such a course of procedure what we should expect of the highest

[1] The Sensational pulpit, in which truth is sacrificed to menacing grandiloquence, constitutes one of the greatest afflictions of the age.

wisdom and goodness? We must look to the end assigned and the means taken to compass it. We must bring under consideration all that we know of these heavenly qualities, as observable in operation around us. If the reported performances fail to come up to this criterion, then they are wanting in credibility. We have applied this method to the story of Pharaoh, and it will be found to reach very much further. Our language itself—all languages are encumbered with the verbal ruins of imperfect conceptions, and thousands continue to be misled by stark forms of expression, funereal urns of departed thought which contain no longer any vital signification.

There is probably no idea, for instance, more firmly fixed in the popular mind than that heaven is a place, and that it is vertically above us. To begin with, it is confounded with the heavens, the uplift, that is the sky. A man in England turns up his eyes to heaven: a man in Australia makes a similar gesture, whence is at once derived one heaven as the antipode of the other. But apart from this, heaven, as the supposed dwelling-place of God, cannot be local at all, cannot contain God, who is everywhere and uncontainable. The contained is always less than the container. Neither can there be any local hell, which man from time immemorial has established as

beneath and below him. But it is not on or in the earth. Nor is it under the earth; for that space is occupied by the heaven which is the counterpart of ours. Station ourselves where we may upon the surface of the earth, and it results that heaven and hell, viewed as places, are either everywhere or nowhere. But in every direction we are surrrounded by the visible heavens, the earth a globe suspended in the apparent centre of a boundless hollow sphere of sky, crowded and sparkling with suns and systems, unquestionably maintained by the Almighty in all their magnitude of life and motion. We actually see then, 'with our own eyes' that He and His infinite works exist everywhere, and dimly behold His power in operation; but heaven, *per se*, nowhere, and hell nowhere. For as God is everywhere, if there be heaven it must be related to the fact of His omnipresence and be also everywhere; but hell, consisting in the assumed fact of His absence, can be nowhere. And if it be still averred, that there must be actual *places* rather than *conditions* of future reward and punishment, theatres of celestial *panem et circenses* and model prisons,[1] they must be upon some other planet under conditions of existence so essentially

[1] Like the *Inferno* of Dante—as a poem 'wonderful' exceedingly, but very depressing. True Christian feeling therein indeed *caddi, come corpo morto cade.*

dissimilar to ours, as to eliminate all the palms and penalties of the conception. But it is evident that the same laws (of the larger ones, so to say, we are certain) govern the planets as the earth, and the idea of a non-natural planet is an absurdity.

CHAPTER X.

WONDER.

A MIRACLE may with sufficient accuracy be defined as an event alleged to happen contrary to the Divine laws governing nature, the first effect of which upon the mind (oddly enough *in agreement* with law) is wonder. But it is more probable that the course of nature having for ages before and since the assigned periods of miraculous dispiay followed its undeviating tenor, should have pursued it then also, than have suffered any interruption. We cannot imagine the sun ever taking a long or a short vacation at the cost of universal death. Nor, supposing miracles to have happened, is there much to be gained by it, beyond their immediate effect on the few surrounding witnesses. The reflective mind estimates wonder at its proper value as the essential characteristic of ignorance. For what temporary portent however robust, at all equals the marvel (if we must have it so) of the continuous existence of the Universe and

all the life therein? A man unable to deduce an Intelligent First Cause[1] from observing the regular course, for instance, of all vegetation, would certainly fail to do so from being informed that there once was a dead twig that blossomed. The condition of nature as it is, is more convincing than the whole collection of miracles. But it does not excite wonder, simply because we are accustomed to it. And what is the use of wonder? Its principal function is linguistic, that is, to rhyme with thunder in our poetry, an appointment it very rarely fails to keep. But could we detach our minds from the effects of habit, is not the least natural change that takes place under our eyes quite as surprising as any miracle related to us? Miracles, then, are *per se* entirely superfluous. What uninformed person, who had had no observation of trees, if first shown an acorn, and then an oak, and told that by seemingly merely lying awhile in the ground one changed into the other, would not account it a miracle? And it is in fact quite as 'stupendous' an event as the blooming of Aaron's rod, and indeed more so, because while being no merely asserted one, it is one repeated through countless ages, and still invariably recurring. But the miraculous sacerdotal sceptre could not save

[1] And continuous sustentation proves it an Everliving Cause also.

itself from being lost. Again, why should an alleged prodigy be supposed to gain in probability, because of its unique character? The very fact constitutes the strongest presumption against it. That could only *seem* a miracle which was the first noted instance of the operation of a hitherto unobserved law, and would soon come to subside, as a cause of astonishment, into the ranks of its fellows. But the onliness—to coin a word – the onliness of such an event destroys the presumption of law, and throws it entirely out of the field of nature.

Nor should it remain unnoticed that described miracles are sometimes of an implied twofold character, though only the first act is reported. The waters of Egypt are turned into blood—but they must have been turned back again into water. The Solar System comes to a standstill—but it must have moved on again. Moses was more careful of his own staff in that fable which betrays itself by the too specific instruction[1] to take it up *by the tail*, for that he changes back immediately; but Aaron's, which devoured the serpents of the Egyptians, must have been reconverted too, though no bigger for its meal, and having yet to bloom. The bodies of the saints

[1] There is a similar excess in the story of the marking or branding of Cain—for who was there to see or to be warned by it? And it did not even prevent his marriage—but to whom?

said to have arisen at the Crucifixion, to have entered into the city, and been seen of men, having been suddenly recomposed from the dust, must as suddenly have been decomposed back to it. But why, to employ rough human language, should God have taken so much trouble to beat Pharaoh, to back Joshua, to express his astonishment at a Crucifixion which, we are told, He had from all eternity prepared and provided for? Certainly the necessity of these double operations, to take the three cases only, squares the improbability of their occurrence. But the constitution and course of nature do not suffer to be struck from their revolving mighty wheels a single scintilla of analogical evidence in favour of miracles; all the weight of her silent testimony, all her *vis inertiæ* lean mountainlike against them. Now, if the Almighty desired to compass a certain moral end among men by means of physical machinery, or by mere violence—a most doubtful hypothesis—would He be more likely to do some act in accordance with His existing laws, or against them? The presumption is overwhelmingly in favour of the former mode. Nor would the occurrence in the midst of us of events flatly contraventory to known laws (though the modern world, at any rate, has never been so perturbed) be otherwise than likely, so far from strengthening the confidence of man in his Heavenly

Father, to give rise to a suspicion of the existence of a rival and conflicting power. The inference would be unavoidable. It is manifest that, had He wished to astound some ten or a hundred ignorant[1] Hebrews, there must be in the infinite category within the bounds and scope of His existing ordinances, numberless acts, which would have served the purpose without the even momentary stultification of His whole eternal code. Certainly, the contemporaneous occurrence of events, partly according yet partly contrary to nature, suggests conflicting causes, diverse authorship. But Jesus, being described as the Son of the Author of Nature, and later as that Author Himself, would by these miracles have been proved to have inconsistently exercised a usurpation which came and departed with Him—another miracle, leaving itself no trace of its reign, but the original laws, instantly resumed, in the possession of the field, and therefore, too, the Original Lawgiver. And that He, after thousands of ages, should be suddenly seized with a desire, during a year or two, to 'prove' Himself God to a handful of silly people, by means of actions contrary to everything that He had invariably designed and done, and thereafter intended to continue among men, and by observation of which they

[1] Moses at any rate grapples with the great and the wise—the King and his sages; St. John Baptist with Herod; and our Lord with the High Priests, the Scribes and the Pharisees.

recognise that ever-glorious and immutable Hand, were an assumption utterly opposed to the wisdom of God, and should be fearlessly repudiated accordingly. At any rate, it would appear unanswerable that if the proof from design applied to the constitution and course of nature lead irresistibly to our belief in that Almighty Creator and Father Whom we love and adore, and in His eternal consistency of purpose and of performance, a similar method applied to the *corpus* of non-nature must inevitably bring the believers therein to the conception of another and wholly different God from ours.

The cultivation of the organ of wonder and of belief in the non-natural (for the word *super*natural seems artfully to imply the occurrence of something above, but still conciliable with the plan of nature) which thus comes to be tacitly accepted as something which *might* happen again, enfeebles and misleads the common intellect. For instance, what direful miscarriages of justice for ages resulted from the belief in witchcraft![1] Besides which, the man is less likely to reason with accuracy upon the affairs of ordinary life and duty who is always leaving a margin for the possibility of special 'providential' interposition as he esteems it, though non-nature[2] is no Providence at

[1] And for this Biblical authority was claimed through the witch of Endor.

[2] Whatever else may be claimed for it, it certainly *foresees* nothing.

all. He will come less to rely on the exercise of his faculties according to Divine law already made and provided, than on fortune, luck, happy chance, blessing, or whatever other name men have bestowed upon a secretly anticipated exertion of celestial power in their behalf. In critical conjunctures he will act like those who should not immediately set to work to extinguish a conflagration, but leave it burning, while, passing over the fire-mains, they rush off to church to pray for a downpour. Habits of wonder, just as do feats of legerdemain, cause a crowd to stare, to gape and to stand idle, and militate against the acquisition of that inestimable faculty, presence of mind. Miracle-belief narcotises the wits of men. Those then, and they are many, who resemble the sect called 'peculiar people,' (who suffer their children to expire for lack of medical attendance, and ought to be arraigned for murder, but as it is escape,[1] our law being very weak as to all crimes of omission), do not, as they think, worship God by their 'faith,' and unjustifiable expectation of His aid, but actually disobey and disown Him. The providential, or, as we should say, Antiprovidential theory flourishes most noxiously in England. But it is a dream, the principal tendency of which is to debilitate Religion altogether.

[1] Probably from some overstrained view of toleration and the liberty of the subject.

It is also a weak point in miracles, that though their asserted purpose is to convince all mankind, they occur only in the presence of a few, and the vast majority for all time are left merely to the *possible* influence of record and rumour. Yet the convincing of mankind at large and for ever was far more important to be accomplished than that of certain individuals at a passing time. It is all very unlike the contrivance of Divine Wisdom. Indeed, faith being imperatively required, nothing could have been better calculated to originate dispute. But Divine work of the kind would not have left even a child room to doubt, for instance, the possibility of the ascension of a human body to the skies, any more than the morrow's sunrise, the most glorious ascension conceivable, though even that is an optical illusion. Churches inherit no miracle-working power—we are to believe it expired suddenly with the last Apostle; and well indeed that it was so, if the idea is to be entertained that the Apostles took upon themselves the right of Divine capital punishment for even grave, let alone minor offences. What did Ananias and Sapphira really die of?

To resume, if then we arrange all miracles, according to their potency, in a *corpus* elsewhere termed non-nature, consisting of miraculous wine, blood, Pharaohnic lice, hail, snakes, and darkness, resusci-

tated dead men soon to die again, and the rest of the strange anticosmos, and apply to it comparative analogical analysis, is it possible to disclose any vestiges of God or of His laws?[1] None. What then do we discover? The darkling face of the waters, before the Spirit of God moved upon them. The proof from design, which, applied to nature, is irrefragable, has never been baulked in its investigations by a sudden landing in non-nature. It has never lighted upon any physical fact analogous to a miracle. The traces of contrivance in the one direction cease as to bodies of men and animals with death. Decay, in the other direction, ensues, and the dissolution of matter into its constituent elements. Such an event as the return of a dead, still more a corrupted human body to life is not provided for by any scope of design whatsoever. In whatever perishing stage was Lazarus, nothing could have followed but the incipiency of the next. The converse issue necessitates the operation of a different set of laws. Not only this: they must have been called into sudden operation, and almost for that exigency only—although the several instances of this kind of thing go to pretend to the influence of a law. More still: Lazarus is thus ordered from his grave only to die again. For, as

[1] See for many ingenious explanations of Old Testament miracles by natural causes, the *History of the Jews*, by the late Dean Milman.

assuredly he is not still living here, save in the form of the poor, who are always with us, it would otherwise result that a mortal body is co-existent out of this life somewhere—that is everywhere—with God, which is impossible. It is to be considered, also, whether the subjection of Lazarus to such a fate, for the sake of a display of power, would be concordant with Divine Mercy. How fearful must it have been to be called upon to undergo a second passage through the valley of the dreaded shadow! Besides, his spirit must have been recalled from its rest—*Heus, procul ite profani*!—only to be sent back again, unless the second Lazarus were merely a mechanical, and, so to say, galvanised Lazarus. It is difficult, on the whole, to determine which of all the inevitable inferences that must be drawn, is the most incongruous with the Power, the Dignity and the Majesty of the King of kings, Whom, at the least, the story, like other miracles, exhibits in an over-anxious attitude about His title. Who, indeed, were this handful of Hebrews, that He should condescend to produce His deeds, much more spurious deeds, before them? This miracle, more almost than any other, places the Father before His children in a very strange and terrific posture. 'O Almighty Father, when we die, awake us never from our slumber, if it be but to return to the trials and

sorrows from which in death Thou hast set us free, to sin, to suffer, and to die again.' Such might well have been the prayer of Lazarus; and it is hardly to be questioned that much-enduring Dives would have cried, Amen.

CHAPTER XI.

MIRACLES.

If we trace the constituents of water, which it is reasonable to suppose are essentially everywhere the same, whether on Earth or on Jupiter, just as we know that there are no Divine laws in operation by which it can become blood, so there are none by which it could become wine. Now if water possess capacity of blood-conversion, it becomes even yet harder to attribute to it capability also of wine-conversion. But we are told that the Author of all the laws in virtue of which water exists, and wine is made, nevertheless, on one occasion only, instantaneously changed water into wine. It is evident then that here He is assumed to repudiate His wonted course, to call into being an original process (for conversion implies process) or to put forth a new principle of partial or qualified creation. For if the final outcomes were not merely phantom blood or wine, they must inevitably have originally comprised the constituents of blood or wine, and have represented

the sum of the processes by which they come into being, or else these elements must have been in each case instantaneously invented. Now the water of the marriage feast could have contained none but aquatic properties, excepting such as may be common to both; and the influence of time is eliminated; therefore the deficiency must have been instantly supplied by special creative combination to result in wine. But the fluid would then after all agree in its constitution with nature; whence the position is unavoidably arrived at, that it was both a natural and a non-natural product at one and the same time; that is, that the laws of God were, and were not, in concurrent operation. This is chaos twice confounded. Again, to assume that water could be divinely changed into wine requires the previous inception of a law, by virtue of which, having once become wine, it could have again become so—for assuredly no act of the Omnipotent falls stillborn—and, since the performance has ever remained a *brutum fulmen*, the suspension or rather abrogation of *this* law, and its processes also. It is enough to have to deal with the interruption of known laws in these cases; but the necessity of throwing into abeyance another special set besides, could we conceive their existence, adds greatly to the in-

credibility; for it is admitted, that the natural laws at once invariably reassumed their sway.

Similar reasoning applies to the case of special hail and the like. Here there is another concert between nature and non-nature; that is to say, non-natural hail called into being by natural laws, or natural hail governed by non-natural laws: either way it implies an impossibility. Again, look at the motives. At this feast in Cana there had been no question raised as to the Divine nature of the Operator, no contention, no surmise even. Such an act, if observed, would rather have ineffably frightened such guests as those, believers in magic, than have edified them. They would have assigned it to sorcery and the devil. The banquet would have broken up in the 'most admired disorder.'[1] On the contrary (beyond the compliment paid to the bride-groom, not to Jesus), absolutely no notice was taken of the event, and 'all went merry as a marriage-bell;'[2] no explanation was proffered, no exalted purpose achieved, in which respect an act partially revolutionising nature misses its aim. But if it be held that it really was performed for the ostensible motive, namely, the passing gratification of the host and his guests, or the effect the account of it might, or might not produce upon posterity, is such an object in any way commensurate with the stupendous means taken

[1] *Macbeth.* [2] *Childe Harold.*

to accomplish it? Is this deed in harmony with the economy of Divine Wisdom, or otherwise? Surely there can be but one answer.

But could not God then perform the impossible? Certainly not. He could no more make two and two five, nor the same human body exist in two places at once, nor produce wine which was essentially water, nor the converse, than man could. Nor create good which is at the same time evil, nor evil good. Some will urge that this is to impose limits on the Power of God. By no means. It is merely most reverently to declare Him incapable of absurdity and inconsistency with Himself.

The fable[1] of Cana supplies however a striking illustration. So far as we recall, there are but two occasions in the Bible in which water is declared to have been changed into another fluid—the first under the *régime* of the old religion, the second under the dawning of the new. Moses changes water into blood, as becomes the exponent of a God of terror: Jesus transmutes water into wine, as befits the herald of a God of love. It is curious that the miracles should exactly harmonise each with the principles of its parent creed, and involves a decidedly human origin.

It is further to be remarked, that miracles imply a

[1] That is, in regard to its literal signification,—it is probably a spiritual allegory.

local suspension of Divine laws, which nevertheless remain all around in operation. In the story of Christ walking upon the waves, this characteristic is very telling. Nothing is altered either on earth or sea; nor does it appear that anything varies in the person of Christ, unless we are to presume it to be his weight. He moves in the ordinary manner, that is, walks, and He speaks. The bark overburdened gives signs of foundering in obedience to the law of gravitation; Peter, having thrown himself into the water, upon his Master's invitation, sinking also. But Jesus who reaches out His hand to him is standing as if upon a rock. Here we have the suspension of the law, and its customary operation, actually touching hands and in simultaneous conjoint action. And the alteration of weight is not a single one only, for there must have been another when Jesus raised Peter, but still sank no more than when He had only to sustain Himself. As we must believe that a suspension of law,[1] could it take place, must be general, how immensely the difficulty of credibility increases by this variable, partial, and indeed minute operation! In the Cana miracle, too, the interruption does not take place, as here, in the person of the Operator, but in the subject of

[1] See Lessing and others.

the operation. In this case, the motive is either to thrust conviction into the mind of Peter, or to save him from drowning. In the multiplication of the fishes, the laws of generation and production go to the wall. The motive is either to enforce belief or to supply a meal. In all these occurrences the elements of time and growth are annihilated. Again, are the motives adequate to the gigantic and inevitable deadlock in the machinery and sequent order of the life of the universe? Or what is the value of faith physically imposed? Surely of very secondary importance. Look at it how we may, the motive, the means and the results of the entire frame of Non-nature are altogether out of harmony with Eternal Fact. Who then shall presume to say to Reason or to Conscience, 'Behold now God and Ungod! Thou shalt not choose between them?'

In the next place, the object of the Christian miracles was not to induce confidence in God, but in Jesus as a man of God. The claim of incarnate divinity for Himself is of subsequent origin. Even the majority of the Gospels are silent upon it. But this would rather have been proved by His accomplishing things that God, not man, does; than things which the Allwise never does, and which, so far, would go only to prove that Jesus, as a creator, proceeded upon principles entirely inconsistent with

known Divine method. From this point of view miracles lack all trace of Divine verisimilitude. The proof of supreme physical power would have lain rather in acting *like* than *unlike* God in His operations; in an exertion and application of laws, in consonance with their nature, but in a manner altogether beyond human capability. But we must reject the supposition that the Almighty would perform any actions of even this qualified kind, merely to excite human astonishment, or to wrench reluctant assent from the very persons least able to understand their bearing. Leaving natural for ethical considerations, do we come upon any moral miracles in the wisdom of Jesus? Does He anywhere affect to change love into hate? to identify mercy with revenge? Is He here *like* or *unlike* God? It is precisely because reason and conscience perceived His likeness, that enlightened humanity justly adores His memory, and has declared Him worthy of eternal Primacy. But it cannot be allowed that there was such a conflict in the same mind from which emanated both His teaching and His actions, that while the former is manifestly in harmony with divine Truth, the latter as manifestly clash with divine Fact, Law, and Ordinances. Those who believe that Jesus was corporeally Divine, and who on this ground accept the miracles (though even so they are no proof of

Divinity), must admit that He must have been aware that the deeds He was performing were not in accord with the laws of His creation, such as had in fact hitherto governed the creatures upon which He was operating, and were to govern them thereafter; and that while He was observing and enjoining His wonted laws upon the moral side, He was repudiating them upon the physical—an inevitable conclusion—but one quite incompatible with probability, and moreover including an element of inexplicable caprice in a Being of infinite truth and consistency, of which qualities the character of Jesus displays the highest human exemplar. It is the fact that He adhered to the truth concerning the Almighty, and developed His teaching in the midst of poverty, scorn, and deadly danger, and finally shed His blood in maintenance of it to the end,[1] which has for ever touched the heart of Humanity. The last thing He would have conceived, the thing He would never have conceived, would have been to arrogate to Himself the infinite power of God, and the ability to reverse His eternal laws, whence both the claim to work, and the actual working of miracles, must be rejected from His life as foreign and intruded elements.

[1] The real great offence to the hierarchy was His denunciation of certain Mosaic laws and opinions.

CHAPTER XII.

TESTIMONY AND INSPIRATION.

It is more probable that the account of miracles should have been interpolated, than that the whole simple narrative should be false. It is often triumphantly exclaimed, 'If you reject the miracles, you must reject the history altogether.' But no saying, for it is not worthy of the name of an argument, can be more puerile. Are we to throw the Bible aside, with all the views which harmonise with the Divine Character, because of certain others in the same Book which do not? All that is of a sound spiritual description, because here and there immoral passages and stories may have crept in, or because the state of science among the Hebrew writers was manifestly in its infancy? We do not discard the History of Rome, because it opens with the mythical traditions of the kings.[1] It were as reasonable to decline to believe in the existence of Cæsar,

[1] Concerning which consult Niebuhr.

because we may have our doubts about the legend of the Alban sow, or the suckling of Romulus. On the contrary, the proper method is to view a history as a whole, and to repel those elements which are evidently of extraneous origin and conflict with the body and spirit of the work. Nor must it be forgotten that the Old Testament is a combination, written by various hands at widely sundered intervals. We must accept the highest standard which it presents to us (and that is a most exalted one) and employ it to estimate the rest. If we can elsewhere attain to a still more elevated criterion, as in the New Testament, we must in turn apply it to the consideration of that furnished by the Old. But that the God of Truth inspired the writers with error, or with absolutely conflicting doctrines as verities, or with accounts relating to the construction of the universe which Reason, upon actual observation, shows to be false, this is a theory that must be unhesitatingly disowned. It would be simply idiotic, like the conduct of the conclave which oppressed Galileo, to persist in saying that God has declared the earth to be flat and motionless—or the sun to travel round it, when we know the contrary. Nothing, therefore, in the Bible can be inspired which is antagonistic to truth, whether physical or moral. Moreover, knowing what befalls the

history of comparatively recent events, how too, even since the introduction of printing, books have been garbled and maltreated by hands other than their authors, and that even accounts of matters which transpire every day are frequently conflicting, what must have been the fate which awaited manuscripts falling into the hands of successive generations of transcribers, of every kind of theological bias and predilection, and that too, for centuries, amid a perfect hurricane of disputation? As we cannot then doubt the morality of Jesus, nor accept miracles at all—if only because God cannot be consistent in His moral, yet inconsistent with Himself in His physical government[1]—it remains only that at some period, whether in a body, or little by little, the wonders have been woven into the biography of Christ with whose life it is evident they are not homogeneous. St. John, indeed, had such an apprehension of probable tampering with his manuscript of Revelations, that he closed it with a most energetic warning and menace, from which it is to be inferred that alteration and interpolation were dangers almost certain, in his opinion, to be encountered. Probably the Apostle of Love had

[1] Bishop Butler argues most powerfully for moral, from the analogy of physical laws; and claims for them equal certainty, consistency, and immutability.—*Analogy, &c.*

already had observation of them. But reflection upon the nature and attributes of God, shows both the Old and New Testaments to be of human composition; for expressly inspired, they would, as to the facts, be true beyond possibility of question and in no way the cause of doubt, parent of sects; uninspired, we should find in them, as we do, some amount of erroneous science and morality, a defect incidental to all human work. It is clear that, although there is considerable evidence of the early compilation of the Gospel narratives, they depended much upon the treacherous nature of human memory, and hearsay of divers kinds. All that any one of the writers had himself seen or heard, or that he had heard others had seen or heard, was welded together to the best of his ability, and, notwithstanding the miracle of the gift of tongues, the language is not of the purest. Any narrative of an event stands, in impressiveness, a long way off the actual witnessing of it, and any narrative of a narrative much further still. And we have not only the testimony, much of it at second hand, but Pelions upon Ossas of literature disputing or testifying to the truth of it. Is it not, then, impossible to prove that we have an absolutely correct account of that period of the world's history, or wherefore the immense amount of disqui-

sition on the authenticity of the books? It proves too much. A Godbook would have borne unutterably convincing witness for itself, and there is no evidence to show that the Almighty specifically composes books, or that if He do, He made in the Old and New Testament His only appearance as a writer. Let us depend upon it, that the minds and good works of men are as dear to Him in these as in all days, and are neither more or less inspired now than ever.

But touching the Divine authorship of the New Testament, there is an astounding omission, though not the only one of the kind. We are informed that after His resurrection Jesus met with two disciples from Emmaus, and expounded to them in order all things concerning Himself from the beginning. The value of such an exposition must be inestimable. Why was no account ever made of it, for not even a single word has come down to posterity? Is it conceivable that it should have been passed *sub silentio*? Would not the Apostles have listened entranced to every word concerning that priceless interview, and emulating each other in a holy zeal of despatch, have immediately reduced it all *verbatim et literatim* to writing? Here we have it declared that the Divine Son expounded all these things in due order from

the beginning—and then dead silence supervenes. Does not this surpass the myth of Tantalus fiftyfold in intensity? To such a statement as this the narratives we have (subsequently written) must have been as a candle to the sun at noonday, and the Divine one once transcribed, have been rendered quite unnecessary. Yet it is the same authors who inform us of the existence of a history infinitely better than theirs, and yet absolutely suppressed altogether. Surely it is still less credible that Jesus, as a Divine being, should have approved of the omission, or why did He appear to the men and put forth His history at all? In fact, this interview constituted a new and more ample revelation, yet at the same time one too weak to make itself heard of mankind, being poured into the breasts of two men, only to remain there as in two perambulating sepulchres. Can the words of God be thus buried? And reflecting that a single genuine saying of Jesus was and is a pearl of inestimable price, an event such as this suppression is really disappointing almost beyond endurance. These men had the Kohinoor of Christian truth in their possession, handed it over to their superiors, and the latter threw it away as of no value in comparison with, or as conflicting with, their own observations? It is not to be believed that, when they heard the story, they asked no questions, sought for

no precious details. That would be too preposterous. Imagine a man writing the life of a departed king or sage, and saying, in the course of his work, that the king or sage had indeed returned from the dead expressly to dictate to some friends of his the history of his reign or his philosophy; which the latter had duly reported, but that, on the annalist's own part, he had thought it unworthy of comment or reduction to writing; or that, it being so reduced, he had mislaid or destroyed the manuscript, and forgotten all about it altogether. What estimate should we form of such conduct, more especially if we too believe in the asserted resurrection? The story of the men of Emmaus hinges however upon a miracle, and falls therefore under the like objections. But if the other events of the Gospel narrative can do without the miracles, the miracles cannot do without them. For on what is true Christianity based? Is it rather, for instance, on the Sermon on the Mount, or the wonder of Cana in Galilee? It is the natural, and not the non-natural, which affords the real basis. In the long contest for the supremacy, the miraculous have been routed by the other constituents of the Gospel. Segregate the miracles,[1] and found a religion

[1] We are still speaking as to their *literal* purport, even so, *healing* is of course a work of mercy.

upon them, if you can. Do they teach benevolence, truth, justice, mercy? The God of Nature and the God of Jesus coincide; but the God of miracles is the God of non-nature, which is Ungod. What gain could eternal principles derive from association with such a phantasm? On the contrary, their mere contact destroys it instantly, and it vanishes thereupon, like the shadow of smoke, into nonentity.

But is it not rather to be presumed that, if the Omnipotent had designed miracles to carry perpetual conviction to mankind, they would have been of a perdurable description? That the Cross, for instance, remaining manifestly dead and withered wood, would have bloomed throughout all time with roses of Sharon, or diffusing unfading light over Palestine, have stood an imperishable memorial which all men should have visited, and Time been powerless to remove or change? or that He would have erected a temple, or an altar no Titus could destroy? or that inexhaustible fountains of healing waters should have welled forth perennially renewing youth and life? or He Himself have yearly descended upon Sinai to redress all wrongs and purify all human legislation? He is silent. It is uncertain even which is the veritable sepulchre wherein Joseph of Arimathea laid the body of the beloved Master; and Calvary and Gethsemane remain but as other hills and gardens, only

more desolate and neglected than even the site of the Parthenon, or the weird pleasaunces of Tiber. But the lily, beloved of Christ, more wondrously arrayed than Solomon in all his glory, is with us to this day; and we seem to hear a Voice which says: 'Gaze ye thereon, and demand not signs and idle wonders, but be contented with My natural witnesses, that I, the Father and Creator, am ever in your midst through all the ages.'

CHAPTER XIII.

INCARNATION.

When and how the simple and sublime story of Jesus came to be so transformed, must remain in obscurity; nor can the exact period be determined when it was resolved to declare Him the incarnate Son of God, but doubtless the protoplasm of the theory was of early invention. In effect, it represents Him as the offspring of a combined and concurrent effort of nature and non-nature. But so little was wisdom concerned in the hypothesis, that while it demands a manifest and unimpeachable virgin for the mother, it selects an ostensibly married woman, who at the very outset falls, in consequence, under the suspicion of her husband. It is only her human marriage that compels the avowal of her previous divine union. Now, bearing in mind the sacredness of matrimony, and the condition imperatively required, virginity, to be through all time an article of faith, is it the least probable that Almighty Wisdom, had it designed such an introduction of a

new man into the world, would have encumbered his birth with a load of unnecessary dubtation? Or was God indeed constrained to take steps to evade the laws and customs of the Jews, who would never have tolerated a single woman with a child? For assume the suspension of the Divine laws governing nature, and that a virgin could conceive, is not the subsequent marriage a wholly gratuitous element of confusion? Again, the miraculous embryo forthwith relapses under the dominion of wonted laws, and undergoes the customary period of gestation. Natural laws are thus made the vehicle of non-natural operation, laws indeed exist, and do not exist, simultaneously. Can such opposites as fact and negation be thus blended? Minerva springing armed from the head of Jupiter is a far more godlike idea, and 'Let there be light and there was light' infinitely diviner still. Yet there is nothing analogous to either in the circumstances of the birth of the spiritual Light of the world. There is something immensely irreverent in ascribing to a human being the relations of wife and mother to God. As for Joseph, he is in the way throughout, a thoroughly needless element of complication, and the recital of his pedigree not less so. It looks like an antecedent indecision of plan. Even the Popes do not know what best to do with him to this day. It is the secret conviction of

the incongruity of these things that has led the Roman Church to the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, and why not that of her mother too, and so back in endless preveniency—and the probable deification of Joseph, the carpenter, as the stepfather of God?

Moreover, what greater discredit could attach to the initiative taken by a man, than to gestation by a woman, and that too in holy matrimony? If there were any inherent birth-sin, it was not avoided by dispensing with only the male half of poor humanity, the moiety of the composite creature Man. The sin of Eve clave to the woman still, at least to the time of Pius IX., even though Adam should be shelved. The penalty of it according to the Bible continued, at any rate, so to cleave till lately, for the discovery of the efficacy of anæsthetics is not many years old. Yet to adopt the estimate of Eden, the very one of the pair selected after all, was not only the one who first 'fell,' but the inferior altogether. A divine man should rather, therefore, have been born of a man, have leapt like Victory from the palm of his strong right hand; but a being born only of a woman was no man at all. Miracles being in full play, this process presented no more difficulties than the one said to have been resorted to, while being perfectly free from needless mystery and confusion, alien to the

Father of Lights. For although some things, monstrosity of design and plan, to wit, are impossible to God, nothing at all is impossible to non-nature, not even, it would seem, a marriage with nature herself, from which reason looks for no progeny but myths, since the alliance leaves nature just as she was before. But perhaps it is an allegory after all; and means only to convey that Divine man should be the offspring of God and pure nature, and thus the wonder becomes no longer any cause of astonishment at all. It is a pity that the invention should have inflicted so terrible a blow upon the sanctity of wedlock. Almighty Wisdom and Goodness, engaged in founding Christian morality, would have done everything to invest with security and sacredness, not to disparage, the inviolability of marriage; would not have brought even Cæsar's wife under suspicion, pagan though she were; and in no wise have comported themselves after the custom of the gods, from whose exoteric mythology, floating like a wandering perfume from the broken shrines of Greece about the Orient, the idea of the story was in all probability roughly borrowed by men of evidently no great poetical feeling or capacity.

For what, after all, is achieved by the theory of non-natural conception? To make the Almighty the personal father—in a sense the least parallel to

human fathership—of a mortal body is a most disrespectful supposition. Is it the body or the mind of Jesus that mankind principally venerates? Assuredly the mind. The father of Newton was undoubtedly the father of his body. But was he of Newton's mind? No. Joseph, suppose, was the father of the body of Jesus. But was he of His mind? No. Therefore there was no occasion to displace him. The non-natural theory then is of no value, for as to the parentage of the natural body it was neither then nor is now of any relative importance, and the parentage of the mind is an altogether independent function, which must be manifest upon the simplest reflection. When we talk of Socrates, Plato, Shakespeare, Milton, do we even so much as trouble our memories about their bodies? Would it make the least difference if it could be shown that any one of them was bodily a direct lineal descendant of King Arthur, or of Æneas, or of Hercules? Not a whit. Or even if it were claimed that one of them was the corporeal son of God by a virgin—which contact, however, neither slew her then, nor rescued her from ordinary death, nor in any way altered her mortal lot, but that on the contrary, she was immediately married again to a man, when it might have been thought she would have revered that divine widowhood—and were there nothing but this story

that had come down to us, no philosophy, nor poetry, nor divinity, nor celestial discovery—would it much interest mankind? Not the least. Neither, by parity of reasoning, would it in the case of Jesus. Had nothing but the legend of His birth descended to posterity—no Sermon on the Mount, no parables of wisdom, no love, pity, long-suffering, purity, benevolence—it would simply have remained in the same hazy category with the myths of the children of the gods, whose name is Legion. This much-vaunted theory, then, would neither have frightened nor convinced anybody, and the world would have long since asked the Church, if she had no better credentials.

The object of the pedigrees was doubtless, owing to a misconception, to show the descent from David and Levi, and was thus in harmony with the known expectations of the Jews. They wanted no god, but a king. The claim to the corporeal sonship of the Almighty (a far cry beyond David) was of later evolution, in fact, an afterthought. Bearing in recollection the constant tendency of the Greek mind to affiliate kings, heroes, and sages to the gods, it is not improbable that some suggestion emanated from this source towards the divinity of Jesus. It is to be feared that in more remote times, though probably with much skill and caution, the books of the New

Testament, roughhewn at first, were shaped to further ends, nothing being easier in the days of the circulation of manuscripts. But with lapse of years this process became more and more difficult, till the invention of printing rendered it comparatively impossible of execution. The next thing to distorting the biography, was to set the simplicity of Christ's teaching at defiance altogether: to make a new goddess in the person of his mother, an amalgamation of Venus and Minerva; to envelope her with pomp and splendour, and seat her, robed in star-sprent purple, upon the throne of the Cæsars, and finally in a very heaven of her own above Almighty God Himself. The Church of England, however, came in time to resist the intrusion of Mary, but as a compromise, transferred the robes and the regalia to Jesus: a lamentable error, for these are things with which, or if metaphorical, with the mere idea of which, neither He nor His mother had ever any concern whatever, and He Himself distinctly repudiated.

But, generally, the appearance of God upon earth in the form of either man or animal is not a religious hypothesis. It is held indeed to be a fantastic action even for Caliphs to circulate among their subjects in disguise. But what need has the Most High of concealment? There is an element of untruth, a prin-

ciple of ambuscade about such devices, alien to His character. That He could be at once man and God; liable to pain and other fleshly ills, yet not liable; mortal, and yet immortal; infinite, yet finite; eternally living, and yet scourged and dying a public death of infamy, is a manifest impossibility. Is not the flogging of God a notion of horrible impiety? At the best there could only be a semblance of such a state of things—and that is a disguise. That He can be propitiated by bloodshed, whether voluntary or involuntary, on the part of the sufferers, is an idea not worthy of savages. Cain might as well be represented as gratifying Him by the murder of Abel. He is depicted as rebuking Abraham for offering to sacrifice his son, and yet afterwards as sacrificing His own to Himself. What is yet more wild, as sacrificing Himself to propitiate Himself. How can any man in his senses literally believe such things, and impart them to others? Neither can such a Being ascend or descend, or be localised. It is equally derogatory to everlasting mercy to assume the creation of man with a liability to eternal torture, which he must be made of immortal capacity to endure. More outrageous still, is the doctrine that the Omnipotent shares His power with, or tolerates the simultaneous existence of a Devil-god, a rival whom popular superstition holds to be only less

omnipresent and omniscient than the Father of lights Himself. Verily is it midnight at noonday?

There are indeed conditions which we call evils, but are they such in relation to the supposed god of evil? Pain, disease, death are evils, but not evil. Such is the harmony of nature that, when we are out of tune with her, we feel a jar as if caught between her invisible wheels. Pain is indicative of organic variation, is a natural product, but certainly no agent of an Evil Principle. Decay is a natural evil, but not evil. Survey the universe, and where is to be found any vestige of a power conflicting with and defeating the purposes of God? Nowhere. The devil is a human invention, the mainspring of the ancient priestly machinery of fear. He has nothing to do with Nature, animate or inanimate. There are laws of growth and change for ever existing in their orbits, and these all manifest proofs of one general, but not mixed design. It is man who, abusing his free will, raises the devil whenever he departs from observance of the true laws of his being, and becomes the cause of wrong and pain to himself and his fellows. Were there a devil, would he have let off the rest of the creation? What an idea to entertain of Divine Power and Wisdom, to conceive them compelled to put up with the existence of a Dantesque or

Miltonic Inferno—a kind of ante-divine Internationale, with which their perfect order could not consist! Man however lumps together all his departures from right and his failures into a sphere of his own making, assumes a place for it, and confers the presidency of its operation on a supposed evil being, upon whom he can lay the blame of his own weakness, saying to the Father, 'It is not I that have sought to go counter to Thy laws, but that devil of Thine who prompted me.' If a child steal a teaspoon, or, grown a burglar, break into a bank, it is always the devil who hankers after spoons and notes. If A. kill B., it is the devil, again, not A., who thirsted for the life of B. It is all perfectly childish. The most probable origin of the particular devil as a ruminant with horns and hoofs, is that in times when the course of nature was assumed to be antagonistic to God, which it is not, men fastened upon Pan to play the character. The idea, however, is a very ancient one, though ever arising from similar misconception. Men experienced storms, earthquakes, locusts, blights, deluges, while they were in general enjoyment of calm, growth, harvest, tranquil rivers; and even as from these they deduced the agency of a good God, so from the former it is not surprising that, in the inadequate condition of their knowledge (for the arboriferous episode taught them nothing

after all) they came to infer the existence of a bad one, continually assaulting and seeking to destroy his Rival's works. Thus, when they found there could be human scourges also, they assigned the responsibility of their actions to the instigation and ministry of the bad god, as being akin to his other destructive agencies. Is it possible to maintain that false views of physical nature and her laws have no deteriorating effect upon morality and faith? Why, a religion of terror, evolved from ignorance in this respect, is the most immoral belief imaginable, the very parent of wrong, a poisonous fountain strangely bubbling up in the midst of civilisation, and polluting every stream of thought into which its fetid waters find their way, and one which, in these days no less than ever, is in need of the boldest and most energetic measures of disinfection, all vested interests notwithstanding.

Right is an active eternal principle; wrong a negative and inconstant condition. Wrong arises primarily from omission, not commission; from ignorance and neglect of rectitude, which, properly understood and believed in, would come to be invariably followed. As it is, good immeasurably preponderates, in spite of the first great Lie.[1] And this becomes ever more and more the case wherever

[1] *I.e.* the invention of the devil.

sound national education prevails, as in Switzerland. So will it be with our good and mighty ship of England when she shall desist from teaching all hands to tow the spirit of evil upon the face of the crystalline waters of light. Wrong, then, is not co-existent and co-equal with Right; and goodness, not malevolence, is the appanage of Man whom the Almighty created in His own image, not that of the idol of Moses, Wrong having no mind, will, nor voice, act, nor part, in the origination. Nor does man lie under any everlasting ban, unless it be the foolish belief in one. Rulers of old gave him a bad name for their own ends, for inherent universal wickedness was but a specious plea in favour of limitless despotism. It served to convert all men into what the French law calls *suspects*, so that more than half the postulate work of tyranny was justified beforehand. But this doctrine has a fearful catalogue of crimes against Humanity to answer for. The teaching that the heart of man is by nature utterly depraved and wicked, a libel of men upon Man and God together, tends to discourage faith in Eternal Goodness, and all the higher aims and efforts of the human mind, and locks germinating Excelsiority [1] within the icy rigidity of despair. Let any man once contract the idea that

[1] This word; designed to mean *moral and spiritual aspiration*, is suggested for adoption from the spirit of Longfellow's fine poem, *Excelsior*.

nothing he can do is of any good, that for him, at least, spiritual improvement is hopeless, and the springs of life and thought congeal in stolid indifference, the active reflex of which is recklessness. Persuade mankind that they are abhorred and cursed of a God of love, and lo! they erect, they have erected, idols as unlike Him as they can feign, and deify fear, bloodshed and eternal pain. The first great requisite then in reforming education, is to lop away the pestilent doctrine from implication, which clings, snake-like, to the primeval upas, to wit, that God is the creator and author of evil, for that it can exist otherwise is impossible, unless He be not Allgood and not Almighty.

But man is a good being formed for society,[1] and rests under no everlasting malison, although somewhat of a 'military animal who loves gunpowder and is fond of parade.'[2] And what some conceive to be divine indifference to the bodily decease of men, or even their own and nature's 'carelessness of the type,'[3] is only a very strong proof of immortality, since it shows both God and man to be equally convinced of the fact, and reassured in the presence of war and other calamities accordingly.

[1] Grotius [2] Bailey, in *Festus*. [3] Tennyson.

CHAPTER XIV.

GOOD AND EVIL.

It is clear, that from causes before set forth, men must have supposed that Good and Evil were eternally co-existent powers, to which theory is doubtless owing the planting of a tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden of Eden. The scheme of this myth[1] necessitates concurrence on the part of the two dominations. It suggests a compromise indicative of truce, a pact, the presumable terms of which are, that man, created by mutual consent, shall have no knowledge of either of them, and take no side, unless he persist in seeking it of his own 'free' will—also a concerted endowment. The establishment of the tree, or some similar expedient, being thus unavoidable, since neither power would have left the field in sole possession of the other, each for like reason being willing that man should remain in ignorance altogether, rather than

[1] Probably of Persian origin.

obey and serve his antagonist, a tremendous threat is put forth to deter the unfortunate being, predoomed to offend at any rate one of them, from making any enquiry, which they are nevertheless both equally certain that he will. Such being the state of the case, the Evil is represented as surprising the Good Principle off its guard, and this in turn waking up in wrath to find itself outwitted, straightway dooms man—*not the enemy*, for it is not able—to death, and, if we are to believe what many people seem to have faith in still,[1] the vast majority of his posterity to everlasting torment after death also. This is the story of Eden. The Almighty is represented as both doing and suffering things inconsistent with His wisdom and goodness; as being at least negligent, if not impotent, and certainly revengeful; nor can the splendour of even Milton's genius suffice to rehabilitate the character of the legend; for while the great poet passes over the obvious fact that evil was already present in the garden, to wit, in the tree, besides certain other awkward circumstances; he allows Satan to elude the vigilance of God in the persons of his archangelic sentinels. What then becomes of Omniscience? But to this day, do we

[1] Fancies of this kind have no doubt much to do with the *triste* element in English life. But how inharmonious they are with the ἄνηριθμον γέλασμα of nature, and even of her Lord.

know anything whatever of an Evil Principle, rival of God? Not a tittle, notwithstanding the stupendous price man is said to be always paying for the discovery. Even to imagine the co-existence of God and Devil is purely unreasonable; not to add that, according to the doctrine of the Trinity, the former in respect of might is not only three in one, but triune *to* one. Yet the equilibrium of powers assumed by belief in the Devil would demand also a trinity of Evil.

It was, of course, easy and safe for the composer of this singular fable, to describe death as the original penalty of disobedience, but it was assumed by him as the sole common heritage of mankind. From that bourne[1] no one had ever returned, so no one could absolutely confute him. But birth and marriage are, upon the side of good, equally the general appanage, and outweigh the gloomy third liability. Moreover, Adam and Eve, were they mankind, and not already 'as gods,'[2] could not have been immortal. The imposition then, as a doom, of an end they could not avoid is manifestly purposeless, unless to cause mere apprehension, which were petty. And is it to be assumed that the animals were immortal too, yet

[1] Shakespeare,

[2] Which they were not: for Satan promises this state to them as a result of tasting.

together with man, propagative of immortal families? It is fearful to contemplate the inevitable overcrowding of the world which would have resulted. Ages ago there would have been sore need of an angelical commissariat. But were immortals changed into mortals, remaining in other respects the same? It is useless groping about the limbo of non-nature in expectation of finding any vestige of God's presence. The alleged cursing of physical nature for man's sake is but a proof of egregious human vanity. Even the Devil could not escape the operations of Oriental metamorphosis, so, when they had once invented him, they turned him into a snake, just as later they pourtrayed the Spirit of God as a dove, or as hovering like a dove; that bird, like all the pigeon tribe, and the lamb as well, being at best but a very feeble emblem of either divine or human nature, which are both essentially energetic.[1] Nor do these metamorphoses take place in accordance with divine ordinances. Did the Devil change himself into a serpent by means of any law of God? That is manifestly impossible, for what control had he, the enemy, over the laws of God? Yet he is actually represented in the book of Job, otherwise the very shrine of poetical sublimity, as capable of

[1] Work, however, the chief good of man, is of course represented as a curse, by the dreamy Oriental author of the Fall.

approaching and coming to an understanding with the Almighty, to exert His omnipotence by delegation to him, the Evil One, in order that a man should be submitted to his tender mercies for purposes of torment; torment so utterly superfluous, that the failure of it is a foregone conclusion on both sides; to say nothing of the implied outrage upon divine Justice and Mercy. Who shall dare to think that the Almighty could either be invited to heed, or would acquiesce in such a monstrous petition? Can night pay a visit to the sun? And is it not far more incongruous still, that assent should be demanded to the idea that God not only so did unto Job, but unto Jesus, unto His Son, unto Himself; wherein the arrangement was more futile still? It is indeed sufficiently humiliating to watch the human mind in paroxysms of stark insanity; but it is rank impiety to pretend that such ravings constitute religion.

The Gospel narrative leaves also to transpire the great difficulty which the companions of Jesus experienced in understanding Him. His superiority was indeed immeasurable. All their previous opinions were in conflict with the ideas they received from Him, and the intrusion of inconsistent matter into His biography, probably from the moment His restraining presence was withdrawn, may even result from an unconscious attempt to reconcile contending

notions. The Devil soon came to the surface again, and was, besides, a character who could not be left out, any more than the bass voice in an oratorio. This would be natural enough in men ignorant as they are confessed to have been. But the more enlightened authorities—enlightened that is up to the illuminating power of the older Scriptures—plainly saw the incompatibility of Jesus with Moses and his Devil, and at once, and throughout, opposed and disowned Him altogether. In the face of such a fact as this, how can it be pretended that the New is the logical outcome and continuation of the Old dispensation? They are distinct religions. It were as reasonable to assert not only the possibility of a blackthorn bearing grapes, but that it actually does so. The terrible divinity who storms and rages through the more ancient records could be no father of divine or human love, pity, and forgiveness. The fear, it may be the conviction, of the hierarchy that they had all along been adoring a wrong, or attributing false principles to the true God, struck them to the heart, and led to the savage ferocity, for they demanded torture as well as death, with which they hunted down their Victim. Steeped in blood as were alike their history, their creed, and their code, it was natural that nothing but His blood also should satisfy them, and they despatched Him accordingly,

as their forefathers had ever slain His like; or, as they would doubtless have pleaded, offered him up as an atonement to propitiate their angry divinity. It was meet, they said, that one man should die for the people, and they sought to soothe their Idol with—a murder. They behaved, in short, like so many enraged Druids, probably worse. They had most likely at first formed some very faint notion that Jesus might possibly turn out to be the king predicted in their prophecies, and they were disappointed. Is it to be imagined that we are better able to interpret their books than they were at the time, or their descendants now are—for these reject Him still, whether as God or King? Certainly it was the restoration of the theocratic monarchy, concerning which the prophecies are but the expression of the national hope, which they expected, not the advent of a teacher, to rebuke their pride and prove to them how they and their ancestors had caricatured the Almighty. It must be admitted that it was enough to enrage them, at least as much as the bold declarations of Luther exasperated the Pope.[1]

Modern commentators, however, have undoubtedly wrested the prophecies to accommodate them to their own bizarre theology. Fear's labour lost. For it may

[1] *i.e.* quâ Pope; for Leo X. was a man of liberal and tolerant mind. —See *Roscoe*.

fairly be enquired, what, after all, is the value of prophecy? To warn people of the coming of changes which will never happen in their day, and over which they have no shadow of control? Has prophecy, even assuming the truth of it, any practical bearing on events at all, being utterly powerless as well before, as during, and after their occurrence? For no circumstance is either hastened, or delayed, or varied by the pressure of any number of foot-tons of prediction, which remains, as ever, the special portion of anility, and has hardly ever been attended to by anybody, whether from before or since the days of Cassandra. In the same category must be included dreams, or nightmares, in respect of which the Allwise is represented as instructing men upon the most momentous issues[1]—not in broad noon, with all their wits, and energy about them—but at night and in their slumber. Is it not rather too stultifying? Verily, if our loving Father desired to put us specially on guard against any coming peril, He would take us at our best, and give us the full advantage of all our powers. What is it that debars Him from the light and life of day? Divination, onarism, astrology, necromancy flourished in the infant world,[2] but modern maturity has pretty well shaken off the yoke of these erratic figments, at any rate, in the West.

[1] See Joseph, '*χρηματισθεις κατ' ὀναρ.*'

[2] 'Antiquity, the Youth of the World.'—Bacon's *Essays.*

It is true these four phantasms once whirled along the pretended chariot of God hither and thither, as they listed, in the Oriental heavens; but if they had been tendered to Phœbus in exchange for his dazzling team, they would even in his time have been at once repulsed as mere spectral illusions of the dawning of the human mind.

Yet after a lapse of more than eighteen centuries, dogmatic Christianity remains unaccepted by and even unknown to the vast majority of mankind. It is not half wonderful enough to meet the requirements of the far Eastern imagination, which ages ago utterly surpassed it, by anticipation, in the imposition of the marvellous upon slaves. Yet can it be contended that innumerable millions have lived and died without any knowledge of or belief in God—that He, the Lord and giver of life, remained an Almighty absentee during all the ages before the birth of Christ? or, can Christians, let alone Churches, assume that there is anywhere a myriad-peopled hell? Veneration of God, love, self-denial, and devotion are not the exclusive property of modern dogmatism. Truly, when Athanasius[1] put forth his fulmination,

[1] *Athanasian Creed.*—The Archbishop of Canterbury: 'With regard to the damnatory clauses, there was no person in that room who believed in them in their simple and literal sense.'

The Bishop of Peterborough: 'That is why I want to get rid of them' (laughter). *Meeting of Convocation*, Feb. 9, 1872.

Eternal Benevolence must have smiled at his wasted energy and his ignorance. Reflect for a moment upon a man presuming to sentence mankind to everlasting torments, and the quaintness of the situation is evident. If there be any lesson more to be deduced from the teaching and life of Jesus than another, it is that of forbearance. But was ever moderation even, a principle of any of the creeds? Quite the contrary, tolerance is the child of States, not of Churches. It is the glorious birthright of the layman; even Pilate was far milder than Caiaphas. The composers of creeds took up hard and fast attitudes, their adherents take them still; and did and do eternally burn everybody who ventures to differ from them, but theirs is now an innocuous fire, provocative of nothing but risibility. Is there any more exhaustless repertory of commination than that appertaining to the Church of Rome? Even the Apostles—Jesus being once dead and buried—began early to brandish the falchion of 'Anathema Maranatha.' The epithets of 'atheist' and 'infidel' are constantly on the lips of so-called Christians; but Sacerdotalism was never particularly prone to mercy. Let the Albigenses, the Hussites, the Morescoes, the Huguenots bear witness. Ask of Cranmer, of Servetus, of the Covenanters—in a word, of the millions who have perished by fire and sword,

and slow tortures, for the defence of reason, conscience, and conviction against the self-styled 'successors' of Jesus; who would perish yet—were it not for the imperial protection of States—doomed in the name and by the authority of a so-called divine revelation. If it be indeed divine, as hitherto interpreted, it has been long, very long, in justifying that distinctive character. But such was formerly the folly of churches and creeds, that it attributed the wickedness of persecution to the good pleasure of the equable and forgiving Jesus, and, while declaring Him to be the only Son of the God of Love[1] and Mercy, practically adopted an ironical and somewhat Mosaic interpretation of these hallowed attributes.

A creed of undogmatic, that is tolerant, Christianity is by no means the dream some hastily contend; dogmatism is ever little worth, and faith upon compulsion no faith at all, only terror.

Among the bases of a further reform of religion are:—

The worship of Almighty God in spirit and in truth. Surely this may be laid down authoritatively and dogmatically enough for the most exacting; or is Jesus greater than GOD, since about Him only, men

[1] St. John. Also, 'Love is heaven, and heaven is love.'—*Sir Walter Scott.*

can presume to be positive? The present creeds are disfigured with materialism, with the unspiritual ideology of Judaism, and with belief in magic. But Rome believes in modern miracles, England only in ancient.

Long-suffering. Official churches, however forbearing their chiefs,[1] have little patience: Rome none at all.[2] Is, or is not, that of England imposed upon her by the State? The Greek Church of Russia and the Lutheran of Sweden brook no dissent at all.

Simplicity. The churches are too open to political competition for rank, wealth and dignity, the Pavonism of St. Peter's, the scarlet of Cardinal princes, and the golden honours of nobility. But that Crowns should have the power of conferring the latter as rewards upon priests, as well as laymen, is both just and expedient.

Right Education. The churches impede it by the propagation of notorious scientific and moral errors in the schools upon alleged divine authority, and by encouraging the stupefying belief in an Evil power or principle—Parody of God.

Love. The churches maintain fear, and eternal fiery torment, as incentives to faith. This is positive unreason. Perhaps the blue and red fires of the

[1] In personal amiability no one surpasses Pius IX.

[2] Witness the excommunication of Dr. Döllinger and Père Hyacinthe.

last great transformation of man are too picturesque and popularly impressive to be foregone? No, on the contrary, they are the principal standing-joke of the people, the theme of a million jests a day.

Truth and fidelity to the general character of Jesus. The churches depart from it, since they have put Him in the place of the Almighty, Who has come to be looked upon quite as a monarch in exile—only the Supreme Deist—and have made Christ both a king and a tyrant upon earth. 'My kingdom is *not* of this world!'

Although this is but a brief sketch, susceptive of vast amplification, the irremovable foundation thereof is the life and wisdom of the Architect of Christianity Himself.

CHAPTER XV.

IMMOLATION.

At the first touch, then, of calm and dispassionate examination, the machinery of non-nature crashes into the abyss out of which it was galvanised. The Fall of man and original sin go with it. What was the supposed deed, whence arise the idea and theory of birth-sin? Man's first[1]—and then, of course, only—act of disobedience. In what is this act fore-owned to result?—the acquisition of the knowledge of good and evil. Man unfallen distinctively knew, then, neither the one nor the other, and therefore was not aware in what the virtue of obedience and the sin of disobedience consisted. This is admitted, 'for' says Mephistopheles, 'God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof then your eyes shall be opened—so they were as yet shut—and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.' But this knowledge they *then* had not; could not even have understood the purport of such an address; therefore could not knowingly

[1] 'Of man's *first* disobedience and its fruit.'—*Paradise Lost.*

obey or disobey. And how could Satan know *what* God knew? Their sin then (if any) was ignorance, a condition to which they had been expressly submitted by the divine will. In what light does the transaction exhibit Eternal Justice? But we forbear to characterise it. Assuming however the offence, the penalty is enormously disproportionate, and involves the innocent with the guilty. But that is pure Judaism all over. Is it the benevolence, the justice, the mercy of God? Again, we find the very first man handed over, like Job and Jesus, to the special animosity of the Devil. But they, at an immense remove from man immortal as to the body—the case of Job at least must be conceded—successfully withstood the adversary. One mortal man, then, after ages of inherited guilt, was morally better than immortal man fresh from his first interview with God. Consider also, the course of action attributed to the Omniscient. Having just completed man 'in His image,' and given him the dominion over all things, with sun. moon, and stars for his attendants, He forthwith exposes the crowning perfection of creation to destruction, that is, He builds up all this living adamantine work around His throne, merely for the Devil, like Remus, to jump over and dash down again. Is this the Wisdom of God? He permits *His own* enemy to assume, in effect lends him, the form

of a familiar companion to Eve; though this is not much, after granting him any access to her at all. She, however, is not in the least struck with the singularity of a talking serpent, and never dreams of calling Adam (as she instantly would have done) to listen to it. With a few words, the devil, God being absent or indifferent, mars the glory of His achievement at its very culmination, and at once, by a few minutes' conversation with a woman, takes part possession of the world and of man for ever. Is this a true description of the Power of Almighty God? No: it is only the so-called Fall of man; and a most prodigious decline from common sense the doctrine assuredly indicates. It is a melancholy fact, that this silly imbroglio should be imposed for truth upon children, while their teachers pretend to wonder that they often make fun of it. And having implanted such derogatory ideas of God in their minds, how can they be expected even to approximate to a true conception of His character? Is it matter for surprise that schools and factories should buzz with irreligious ribaldry? 'A hideous hum runs through the arched roofs with words deceiving'[1] The people *cannot* love the terrific Being set before them, and where love is none, true reverence can never come into existence. You will

[1] *Ode on the Nativity*, Milton.

never even begin to render religion attractive to the masses, until you clear away from the Idea of the divine nature and character the deposits and incrustations [1] time has precipitated upon it through Moses, and other authors of the Testaments. The strong practical sense of the age rebels against, and repels, untruth in high places; for the deification of fable is the stultification of the human mind, and the misleading of every step of life further and further from the presence of the Eternal Lord God, All-good and Allwise, as well as Almighty. This work of purification is the first great duty of an educating Church—for the Church ought to be Incarnate Education—in these our times, and its fulfilment will leave neither scope nor inclination to discuss without ceasing the comparative width and texture of phylacteries, stoles, albs, and chasubles.

The Hebrew mind manifests from first to last a perfect monomania for material sacrifice. Its theology commences with describing God as serving up man to the devil, and finishes with depicting Him as immolating His only Son to Himself. That between these extreme altars of Divine mercy and power, the Jews should have forfeited everything else, including their own nationality, is in no way the subject of marvel. Why should the attributes of the Most

[1] See Plato's beautiful image about a sea-god.—*Republic.*

High fare any better at the hands of such fanatics than their Possessor, or themselves? These people ever would have blood, and they did have blood—ovine was it as a rule, but they refrained not from human on occasion.[1] There was always some mysterious crime, of priestly invention and discovery, lurking ready for the supply, or a drama of divine detection to be performed over some known offence like Achan's. We are quietly told to look upon these pictures as types. But was not the blood actually shed, and of what in the world can bloodshed be a type but killing? What is all the dismal imagery clustered and coagulated upon the sacrificial lamb, but the language of unreasoning slavish submission? Can the Almighty attribute to it any value whatever?

The vicarious element is the very consummation of injustice. The Hebrew Ideal remits A's sins because A offers to Him the blood of B, or of some harmless animal, who has done no wrong; that is A, for whatever reason—but no end will justify this means—murders B. Can there be anything more inconceivably foolish than that man, having offended God, and being called to account for it, should proffer Him one of His own rams or bulls or one of His own

[1] There is no sure foundation set on blood,
No certain life achieved by other's death.'—*Shakespeare.*

men, by way of atonement? A tyrant majority crucified Jesus for the same reason for which they poisoned Socrates—He put them to shame and exposed their hypocrisy. To represent the execution of Christ as specially voluntary, unless it be as resulting from his persistency in well-doing, is a perversion of truth. Even otherwise, how can the offer of his blood by B, the only innocent letter, be of any service to the remaining guilty members of the alphabet? What, too, is the good of death at all, the victim being really immortal? Besides, the doctrine still represents the All Benevolent as requiring the penalty of the wicked to be paid or suffered by the good. The murder then, of yet another brother by Cain, had there been one, would of course have atoned for that of Abel. If there be a family of murderers, except one, God will pardon them all on condition that that guiltless man either commits suicide, or procures or provokes the others in a body, or some one of them, to assassinate him. They have but to call the crime a sacrifice, and all is well. The pretence, however, that the innocent sufferer is not one of the family at all, but His own particular Son,[1]

[1] It is essentially a *heathen*, not a *Christian* idea—

'O Father *Odin*!'

. . . . . .

'But the priest was happy,
His victim won:
"We have his dearest,
His only son!" '—*Poet-Laureate.*

only increases the incredibility; and that the victim is Himself offered to Himself, yet infinitely more. But take a common sense view of the question. What would sound criticism say of the story of an absolute king, let us imagine, of England, who should have required his Prince of Wales to submit to whipping and the gibbet, to consent to be hanged, drawn and quartered, as a means of obtaining pardon for a nest of traitors who had conspired and rebelled against both of them? Such a legend would not have been pardoned even to Shakespeare. People nevertheless attribute a similar action to Omnipotence, not apparently perceiving that the Son being not only really immortal, like all men, but also divine, renders the execution nothing but a Passion-play and a chimera. Really, if the old Biblical idea of God were true, only in the sense that He is an irritable, jealous, or vindictive Being, men ought to look to be afflicted by all the combined plagues that ever visited the earth, as a punishment for entertaining such a theory about Him, worthy only of the idolatry of a race of monsters,

> Dragons of the prime,
> That tare each other in their slime:[1]

and of a truth, so have many generations of men

[1] *In Memoriam.*

actually done, to compel a belief in such an astonishing figment of Unreason.

The passions of mankind are not evil, demanding, as such, incessant condonation, and have no reference to a supposed principle of Evil. They were implanted by God, Who with them gave us the general power of self-government. A great devil, sharing in the creation, would not have consented to the existence of any moderating faculty at all. What men call evil arises from the want or impairment of control. All sins and crimes are originally directly or indirectly traceable to this sole cause. But even the sins of a state of nature must be few, the crimes fewer. Of the latter, civilisation both creates and rightly judges many. How moral weakness arises is a very complex question; man however was not designed to be perfect in this life. It may not improbably be the correspondent of some want of harmony in the bodily organs of individuals. Perhaps no man enjoys absolutely *mentem sanam in corpore sano.* But aggregate man is, at any rate, so far perfect, that he is perfectly fitted for the sphere in which he exists. Recognised 'evil' tendencies may be, and are, successfully combated by education, which is either the teaching of self-control, or nothing. But were there in existence absolute Evil, this could never happen, for who ever heard of educating the Devil? And if

quasi-omnipotent 'temptation' were a fact, no one ought to be punished. But it is a delusion.

There is nothing necessary for man to do that he cannot do; much also that he can effect far beyond the scope of his need, witness, for one instance, the truly heavenly development of the fine arts. There are also many things that he cannot do—granted: but what that is of any real importance to him? Being on his road to another state of existence, and bearing tokens therefore of incomplete fruition of his powers, he is conscious of fulfilling a stage of his appointed cycle, but which one he knows not, and would be no better off if he did. There is no occasion to recapitulate known arguments[1] in proof of the existence of soul, or rather spirit, for surely it may be taken for granted. Still human intelligence, reason, conscience, leaving an immeasurable gulf between man and the simiad, and an equal one between himself and his mere animal nature, enforce the conviction of a far higher ultimate destiny. Here he is but God's apprentice, often a most loving, patient, and diligent student[2] of his Master's works. Have not men lived, do not men still live, who manifest a distinct reflection of the Divine mind? It is mere

[1] From the *Phædo* of Plato to the *Analogy* of Butler, covering, say, *over* 2,000 *years*. Upon the immortality of the soul *inter arma silent leges*' *Mosaicæ*.

[2] 'Cœlis exploratis.'

folly to be continually asking the Almighty, why He did not make man somebody else, or to complain of His gift of free will, because we abuse it. That we can do so, is a proof that we are free. So discontented are many because they have no pinions and plumes, that conceiving the possession of them to be the probable *summum bonum* of the Hereafter, they are continually dwelling on the prospect of becoming a kind of glorified man-birds, perpetually posting from sphere to sphere, harping upon Eolian harps and singing interminable hymns. It is a very pretty, but a very narrow idea; for as it is, the occupations of genius upon earth are of far higher moment. What improvement would feathers be to the spirit of Newton? And as for the transcendent beatitude of flight—Eternal Power '*sedet, æternumque sedebit*'—God is anything but volatile.

That which dogmas embody, is, or was intended to be, we are told, an exercise for faith.[1] The machinery is very enormous and very complex for so simple an end. But is there any degree of excellence in which faith in miracles can surpass faith in God? If we believe in Him, we ought to be able to give very sound reasons for the faith which is in us, for it is not in accord with His wisdom to prize mere blind

[1] The conditions of the famous rule—'*quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est*'—have never existed.

submissiveness; but who can give a reason for faith in Unreason? To repose, therefore, upon God, is far more estimable than to rest upon miracles. Certainly, if Jesus be God, the same arguments hold good for faith in Him, as in the Author of nature, but not for faith in an author of non-nature. The mission of Jesus was to establish true reliance upon God, not upon signs and wonders,[1] assent to which brings us no whit nearer to Him, than as He has already revealed Himself in His works, which, if it be any enhancement to them to be called prodigies, are prodigies of perpetual revivification. It is evident then, that all the privileges that may await upon belief, are already foretasted by confidence in God, and the contrivance of a second, and lower kind of creed, is mere superfluity, since the greater contains the less; and that other order, so far as it relies upon the miraculous element, has been incontestably proved to be in conflict with the first, or to hinge upon a supposed condition of affairs which, as it involves a different and incongruous system of divine laws governing nature, would necessitate also another and irreconcilable lawgiver.

[1] SS. Matthew, cap. ix, xii, xvi; Mark i; Luke viii; John iv, vi.

CHAPTER XVI.

ASCENSION AND INTERCESSION.

We are told, upon Bible authority, that the pains of child-birth are the express penalty of Eve's transgression; the like is attested of other sufferings. But they are obviated by chloroform. Plagues are to this day constantly represented by 'sensational' preachers, as visitations denoting special divine anger. But we can stamp them out; war also—but it will have to yield to arbitrament. Famine, moreover—but it can be provided against. The proof is manifest that all these Scriptural notions are erroneous; and the injury they have inflicted upon mankind cannot be computed. For what was the good of even thinking how to alleviate the effects of divinely ordained punishments? Still men did so, and were frequently put to death in consequence. The scope of all these pompous and haughty declarations of ancient ignorance, was to cripple thought and action, and to enjoin passive endurance of all kinds of preventible calamities, including the sway of

merciless tyrants, and intolerant heresiarchs. It is chiefly in the interest of such persons, that these books have been so long forced upon mankind. The spirit of despotism pursued people of yore into the innermost recesses of family life. Man and woman, principally for the sake of gain, or from mere love of oppression, were hampered in every form of union, and given over to false modesty, until at last even the procreation of children came to be esteemed as an action of dubious morality. Honest innocent Hymen got mixed up with Sin and Death, and became nervous. Hence all sorts of disastrous subterfuges, and attempted evasions of nature, and rickety progeny. Truly it was the laws of God themselves that were the real pests in the eyes of those antique and dragon-like bashaws, and therefore they endeavoured either to usurp the control of them, or to practically stamp them out by mendacity: so it came to pass that they laid under an embargo the cradle, the altar, and the grave; invented birth-sin, and shame; imposed the worship of a jealous and an avenging Deity, and established, in full blast, hell and the devil, as a sequel to all kinds of earthly wrong and degradation. But they will be stamped out also—and their day of doom is at hand.

Society is greatly indebted to Master Fitzgibbon, of the Irish Chancery, for calling attention to some tracts

especially recommended by the Roman Catholic Bishops in Ireland for the instruction of the young.

These, a series of ten small papers, by Father Furniss, Master Fitzgibbon examines on the ground of humanity. One is entitled 'The Sight of Hell,' the result of a visit made by St. Francis, of Rome, under the guidance of the Angel Gabriel; many sights of horror are witnessed, and a 'dreadful sickening smell' experienced by the saint, is thus described—'If one single body were taken out of hell and laid on the earth, in that same moment every living creature on the earth would sicken and die. Such is the smell of death from one body in hell. What, then, would be the smell of death from countless millions and millions of bodies laid in hell like sheep?'[1] Then follow descriptions of the 'red-hot floor' of 'the burning oven.'

These are the lesson books for Sunday schools, published in the diocese of Cardinal Cullen and with his approval, and there is no public opinion within the Roman Catholic body to prevent them from being put into the hands of children, by whom, although too shocking for quotation, they are to be learned by heart.

But an escape from all these horrors is provided in submission to the priest. The saint finds a girl

[1] He appears, strange to say, to have studied Proportion.

undergoing torment on the red-hot floor. The girl begs to be left at peace for one moment, and the devil answers, 'No, not for one single moment, during the never-ending eternity of years, shall you ever leave this red-hot floor.' Then, at least, says the girl, let somebody go to my little brothers and sisters, who are alive, and tell them not to do the bad things which I did, so they will never have to come and stand on the red-hot floor. The devil answers her again—'Your little brothers and sisters have the priests to tell them those things. If they will not listen to the priests, neither would they listen even if somebody should go to them from the dead.'[1] Here, the child is taught to regard the voice of the priest as the only means of deliverance from the pains of hell. In another passage a girl is presented 'about eighteen years old. What a terrible dress she has on—her dress is made of fire. On her head she wears a bonnet of fire. It is pressed down close all over her head; it burns her head; it burns into the skin; it scorches the bone of the skull and makes it smoke. The red-hot fiery heat goes into the brain and melts it. If she were on earth, she would be burnt to a cinder in a moment; but she is in hell, where fire burns everything, but burns nothing away.

[1] An evident parody of our Lord's remark about Moses and the prophets, which implies the inutility of material resurrection.

There she stands burning and scorching. There she will stand for ever burning and scorching.'

Protestants, in the stories told, are always hopelessly wicked persons. One tale is narrated of a Catholic girl who married a Protestant. After a long course of ill-treatment given in frightful detail, the girl was murdered. Moreover, purgatory is so presented to the youthful mind as to stimulate the desire to buy masses, each soul passing out as his tale becomes complete. Any masses that may be said over the requisite number are not lost, but are distributed by God as he pleases, and the purchaser of each mass gets credit for having provided it.

Little comment is here requisite; but it becomes Christians of all denominations to consider how far they are prepared to countenance such doctrines. If they retain hell at all in their creeds, they will find it difficult to condemn those who only carry out the teachings based thereupon to their inevitable logical issue, utterly disheartening as that is proved to be if only by the above startling exhibition.

The health and peace of the mind depend, like the tranquillity of states, upon a balance of power. So long as the passions are in tolerable equilibrium, there is prospect of a tranquil life. But if one become predominant—to again instance anger, based on a principle of warmth in itself essential—then

violence enters upon the scene, defence changes into defiance, war among nations, murder among individuals assert their hateful sway. So, on the other hand, the absence of it, the extinction of the fire on the hearthstone of the soul, of what is commonly called 'proper spirit,' leads to false compliances, and serf-like submission to tyranny. Now, if the maintenance of equipoise were really beyond human power, the origin of the results which, massed together, compose the *corpus* of the so-called Evil Principle, might be more reasonably held to spring from a flaw or fissure in the divine design. But, on the contrary, man does possess this faculty; the manifest proof lying in the existence of civil society, law, and order, whereby Man rules and men obey. For Man and Nature both assume self-control in men, almost from infancy, and punish them for neglect to cultivate and maintain it. He, who cannot govern an impulse to walk over a precipice will be dashed to pieces by gravitation, just as he, who shall hurl down another, will himself perish under the self-preservative law of society, which also may be rightly described as a (morally) centripetal force, crime being centrifugal.[1] The distinction between Man and men cannot be too fully impressed or realised, since it

[1] Ethics, largely viewed, approach far more nearly to an exact science than is generally supposed.

lifts and wafts the world incalculably nearer heaven; for a man is but as a grain of sand, but Man the whole resounding shore girdling the sea of time, and, in his concrete as the State, the image of God upon earth, infinitely more like Him in many of His attributes, that any individual can ever be, or hope to become. For what one mind, however gifted, equals the sum of minds from the days before the ascidian until now—the boundless collective wisdom of all the ages? Therefore, in estimating the principles of the divine ordinances, it is their bearing upon Humanity at large, which is the true point for observation and study.

With regard to the doctrine of the corporeal Resurrection, the same kind of reasoning applies as to the case of Lazarus; that is, that if it were a divine fact, it must have proceeded, as to the human body of Jesus, by virtue of the divine laws governing nature, which is impossible. Nor does any Church deny that the frame crucified was human. The humanity is the essential feature of the whole scheme of material redemption. If heaven or hell existed, as place, no earthly body could live there, and the idea that the Son of God should, so to say, *wear* a human body, is incongruous and disrespectful, for why the masquerade? So also the notion of 'sitting on the right hand' of God, with Whom there can be no right,

nor left, no ascent nor descent, no motion from place to place,[1] no limits at all, neither throne, crown, sceptre, sword, nor chariot, nor any kind of regal furniture. Even if this be merely all imagery, there is no good in it; seeing that it misleads multitudes more than it edifies, nor is the truth concerning God, authoritatively put forth, the proper subject of tropes, taken from the upholstery of kings. They are all very well in a poem, or a picture, but will not do in a Bible. Again, granted the resurrection of a divine being, how does that lend strength or certainty to the future resurrection of human beings? For, if the laws were indeed suspended, it could only be, on any supposition, in virtue of His divinity; but if he were still a human body, they must have remained still in operation. In respect to the material ascension, the objections (assuming the hypothesis) are as follows:

That the form seen could only have been an appearance, since no one will pretend that Jesus, after His resurrection, had a truly human body, in the sense that it was *His* body.

That if it were not (not only some human, but) the veritable body crucified, the wounds exhibited were not the identical wounds, and therefore proved nothing.

[1] When He moves, all moves.

That as the Spirit of God could communicate with the spirit of man infinitely better without it, corporeal intervention was utterly superfluous.

The actual rising up skyward of a form apparently human, contrary to gravitation, proves that it was not really human, which the crucified body admittedly was, and remained up to the latest observation after death. The rest is a hiatus, upon which the followers put their own interpretation. The body was simply missing.

The theory betrays the most innocent unconsciousness of the fact, that the earth is not flat but a globe; and that a body, if it could ascend (let us say generally) as to one hemisphere, must descend as to the other, and, in respect of destination, be proceeding upon the principles of Scriptural celestial geography, in diametrically opposite directions, to heaven in the one case, and to hell in the other, and this at one and the same time. This objection applies equally to the resurrection, which however, no one claimed to have witnessed. The guard described by St. Matthew cannot be accepted.[1]

It is a reasonable resort of language, although figurative, to describe the approach of the spirit of man to the Spirit of God as ascent, that is from lower to Higher. And were there a devil god, so

[1] '*Fragments of a Wolfenbüttel Unknown*,' Lessing on Reimarus.

also would it be to represent approximation to him as descent, that is, from higher to lower. Heaven is not a place,[1] or a situation, but the Presence of God fully realised. Hell, were there such a condition, would be the absence of God. It is a fair analogy to suppose the law governing the motion of disembodied spirits to be of upward, or rather as respects the earth of centrifugal than centripetal operation. Language however, cannot dispense with metaphor; men will ever continue to say the sun 'rises.' But by the received doctrine of the Descent into Hell, it must be intended, that at some time during the day and a half, that is, from about 3 P.M. on Friday afternoon to about 3 A.M. on Sunday morning, which elapsed between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, Jesus, in the body, descended to hell *from His tomb*, and returned again *to His tomb*, in order to make it the skyward starting-point. Now could there be a more improbable contrivance? Would He not, granting the mere descent at all, have reascended at once from hell? There are no byeways and roundabout proceedings in Divine Wisdom. But if we accumulate all the wrongs and cruelties wrought upon Jesus, upon the crowning act of His execution, as their sum and representa-

[1] Late Rev. Baden Powell, Savilian Professor of Geometry in the University of Oxford.

tive, He may, being thus at the moment of completion in the agonies of death of His experience of all the effects of human ignorance, ('Father, forgive them, they know not what they do') be reasonably said to have 'descended into hell.'

The self-betrayed errors, reflecting faithfully the erroneous ideas held at that period, conclusively prove, that the alleged events are of as purely human invention, as they are discordant with eternal fact, Do not then any longer impart them as facts; or, at any rate, teach also as a corrective the facts, whether physical or moral, of which they may be reasonably found to be only the simulacra.

The separate employment by many of the terms *divine* and *natural* laws, gives evidence of some confusion of thought. For the laws which govern the constitution and course of Nature are divine; and are not merely the visible or appreciable *modes* of natural operation. It is they which control, not that are controlled by, her. Where do we find the slightest indication of the reign of any other system? The people who invented the devil, no doubt assumed the existence of a divergent code, without which it was impossible for him to work; but they failed to perceive that the two sets being in simultaneous and conflicting action, must cancel each other, and leave nothing but a void of atheism. God cannot reign

and not reign, as He must, if there be devil; nor devil reign and not reign, as he must, if there be God. And yet contemplate the spectacle of the devil carrying off Jesus as man—infinitely more monstrous if as God—to an exceeding high mountain (where the height being unnecessary, and the prospect impossible, betrays the story [1]) or a pinnacle of the temple, to tempt, flout, and jeer, 'Cast thyself down if thou be God.' Can it be meant only as an allegory of a struggle against suicide? Not only that, the evil one absurdly claims all the kingdoms of the world for his own, and proffers them as the reward for a single act of worship. And this to the eternal Son of God, Whom he perfectly well knew, both of them being equally well aware of the utter futility of the whole proceeding. It is neither more nor less than Titanic hide-and-seek, or playing at football with the terrestrial orb.

There is nothing worthy of worship in Jesus which does not already exist in God. For He, as a celestial being, cannot comprise within Himself divine, and human, as distinct from divine, qualifications, or be at once mortal and immortal. Otherwise, we should have a Being self-including at one and the same time the principles of Omnipotent authority and

[1] Such beings as gods needed not and would not have ascended any hill for a view which as men they could not have obtained.

unqualified obedience to Himself, which, except as expressive of eternal consistency of purpose, is absurd. What then is gained by the establishment of an intermediary, or the representation of the Universal Father as one remove further from man? Protestants reproach Roman Catholics for making St. Mary an intercessor with Jesus, but do not they themselves so describe Jesus in relation to God? The one idea is quite as sound as the other. If the Son, why not the Mother? What conceivable necessity can there be for the interposition of *any* person between God and man? No doubt they do already make Joseph a medium with Mary, and the saints with each other, according to their presumed rank in the heavenly hierarchy. The logic of the system requires the perpetual propitiation by a lesser divinity of the one next above him in the scale, the issue of which contrivance must be that the least of all will ever be the first besought, and the Almighty Himself, as He is already by the devout masses in Roman Catholic countries, be relegated to an infinite remoteness. Is it not childish to depict Eternal Truth and Justice as being capable of swerving, of experiencing influences from without, and oscillating accordingly with the varying strength of the impulse? An what can be the good of reporting to the Eternal One what He already knows? It may

be so, though rarely, of earthly monarchs. It may be, that we could understand some minor subject in trouble entreating Count Moltke to request Prince Bismark to interest the Crown Prince in venturing a word to the Emperor. But that man, adoring an Omniscient Power, should pray to the archangel Michael to beg St. Peter to implore St. Mary to request Jesus to intercede with God, is perfectly incomprehensible, nor would the abridgment of any of the steps render it less so. It is, in fact, nothing more than a theory of second causes applied to religion; theological plasmody. 'Whatever ye shall ask in My name, God will grant.' But, assuming the efficacy of prayer, would not the All Just, if the thing prayed for were *justum et æquum*, grant it also without, or, if the reverse, refuse? All this paraphernalia for making interest with God, is repulsive to true religion; it is derogatory even to suppose that He can be the subject of court-favour, put it how we will, or that the Omniscient requires any Home Secretaries with machinery of ministerial countersignature. And again, if there be good men who spiritually address the Almighty direct, and He hear and grant but a single prayer of any one of them, the whole concatenation of interdependency straightway collapses. For why should some require no go-between, and others a hundred? and this in

respect of One, 'with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning?'[1] The whole contrivance is but a maze of hopeless confusion, to thread which, its *αὐτόχθονες*, its own peculiar denizens, pass the Being of whom they profess to be in search at every turn, and often, though He never miss them, succeed only, a fact of which they must but too often become dimly conscious, in avoiding Him altogether.

[1] James i. 18.

CHAPTER XVII.

MIND.

HAS unchristian dogmatism, which could discover in the Old Testament 'types' for all things, and that often contrary to the meaning of the writers, never looked about for its own? Not far to seek, it is the Tower of Babel, which the legend goes, men endeavoured to build up to the heavens. Intolerant theology too, imagined a heaven, and set man to escalade it by means of a huge and cumbrous structure, reared over the murdered body of its greatest Victim. It is still to be beheld in course of building, the storey of Papal Infallibility being just completed upon that of Immaculate Conception. But we hear still louder the swelling murmur of the confusion of tongues, which will finally suspend operations already often delayed by strikes and revolts of unwilling labourers, who came at last to perceive they were contributing their toil to the erection of the Prison of the Human Mind. The edifice discloses many an ominous rent and crumbling pillar, and though it still stands,

or rather totters, is clearly unable to sustain further additions to its height, the very summit of which is still, in respect of infinite altitude, as far after all off the stars as is the hollow foundation. The stones of Babel were indeed cemented with asphaltum,[1] but this other makes sick the air with the blood of men innumerable, and the evidences of murder lurk under every landing, befoul every step, besmear alike the arches and the walls. The attitude of the pile resembles that of some vast and glittering serpent, erected coil upon coil amid the bones of its victims, and surrounded with clouds of obsequious and adulatory insects, engendered of the corruption of its lair. The architects, however, finding that they are no nearer to heaven, and that rebellious natural causes are bringing the work to a standstill, yet being minded for their own sakes to keep apparent faith with the expectant multitude below, have proclaimed that God has come down to them, that they have drawn Him like lightning from the cloud;[2] the truth being that they have only elected the chief among them to assume the Divine character. At such a vantage ground as theirs, who, they think, among the common herd below, shall be able to detect the fraud, or even guess at the true internal condition of the

[1] *Ancient History*, Assyria.—Rollin.
[2] Very different men are they, however, to Benjamin Franklin.

structure? But it is a delusive expectation. Truth is photographing their tower from every point of view. Science taking out its quantities, estimating the fault of its proportions, computing its inclination. Soon shall be set free the fatal static pendulum, swinging from the centre to fall without the base, and down shall it come, stage upon stage, storey upon storey, crash upon crash in thunderclouds of martyr-dust, like a volcanic mountain self consumed within, and sinking into ashes amid the smoke of its own torment, while the earth feels lighter, and all nature sighs together with a sense of sudden deliverance and long-besought relief.

Although doom thus menaces in particular the elder fabric of the Church, none can ultimately stand which maintains on authority things which it puts forth as facts, but which are evidently contrary to the 'eternal facts of nature,' as Canon Kingsley observes, that is, of God, the Author of nature. Some few, perhaps, still hold with Aristotle, that visible nature is the work of demons, spirits above man, but below the Creator, though even that would only remove the inevitable conclusion but a step. A nation then, which fosters a belief in these non-facts, cherishes causes of decline in promoting ignorance, and aberration from the truth concerning the Almighty. Religion in England is in a most anomalous con-

dition; for its rites and offices are administered by at any rate a large and increasing body of men, who, in degrees varying with each individual mind, reject its original doctrines, and, in effect, its creed. The fact cannot be longer disguised that science and reason have stormed the sanctuary of superstition, and stand arrayed in the sacred vestments as a spoil. The end was inevitable, yet the means which compassed it are objectionable. It were better openly to re-establish the sole worship of the Almighty in His own name, than, if Jesus be held not to be Almighty, to perform sacred rites upon a tacit agreement that He is to be so publicly acknowledged without a corresponding internal belief. The Church, however, is somewhat of a miraculous description. It can at once be immensely broad and extremely narrow, that is, no self-consistent body at all, but somewhat of a phantasm. It is to be feared, too, that tolerating those who are sufficiently cautious to decently veil their opinions, she is prone to offer up others,[1] whose only fault is their candour, as an atonement for the concealments of the rest. Nevertheless, since the true light will assuredly burst through all trammels, and shine forth avowed, although England is the very home of anomaly, the development of the Broad School is matter for much hope and consola-

[1] Like the Rev. Mr. Voysey.

tion. It owes its origin to the fact that Truth is above all creeds, and will be obeyed.[1] It is impracticable that men of real intelligence should ever remain fettered by all the propositions laid down on authority by believers in witchcraft, demonology, and the divine right of kings. How would Englishmen of these days like to exchange their enlightened Sovereign for another James I. with all his sycophantic and superstitious *entourage*, the character of which even the Burleighs and the Cecils hardly sufficed to redeem? The Church of these days, whose true business is educational and therefore progressive, should no longer impose upon young men desirous of serving her, allegiance to a spiritual Stuart, or an oath in the dark,[2] as a condition preliminary to the performance of simple clerical functions under Victoria. As for the youths themselves, when Alma Ecclesia commands them, *in statu pupillari*, they cannot choose but obey. Like the ancient mariner, she holds them with that glittering Mosaic eye,[3] which still disfigures her visage, and they beat their breasts in vain. There ought to be powers for the removal of disabilities, not for hasty expulsion. What, as it is, often happens, is inevitable. The expanding intellect of maturity sunders the servile gyves clasped upon

[1] Magna est Veritas, et prævalebit.
[2] '*A leap in the dark.*'—Late Earl of Derby.
[3] Coleridge.

nonage. Men cannot justly be called upon to forsake a life's career, or to teach against conscience. The age demands the provision of a suitable alternative. And generally, what authority had the Parliament of the Minds, whether eighteen or three centuries ago, to cripple its own action for these days? Why is Moses to be still set up, like his own brazen serpent, in the place of God, merely on his own invitation, and a new fangled crime of Mosaic blasphemy to be imputed to those who repudiate his cruel and sanguinnary dominion? Some regret may be entertained that the Broad School does not boldly make a more avowed use of its great powers and opportunities, and still further seek to elucidate that more just idea of the Almighty, which even for those who accept the personal worship, rather than the pious commemoration of Jesus, must necessarily be the foundation of all true religion.

The professed object of dogmatism is the training of the soul. 'Even those,' once said His Grace the Primate,[1] 'who think that there should be a separation between religion and secular teaching, do not hesitate to allow that as man has a soul as well as a body—a soul more precious than either his body, or his intellect, there can be no training, which is

[1] At the opening of a school in Lambeth, 1871.

not a training for the soul.' The archbishop here attributes to man the usually accepted theory of tripartite composition, body, mind or intellect, and soul. Now, if all training must affect the soul, must she not, unless unalterable in nature, depend upon the intellect, or to use our good old English word, the understanding, upon which education must first operate? Thus a wise mind will form a wise soul, and a foolish mind a foolish soul. Again, to assume that it is the soul which finally adjudicates between right and wrong, between good and bad ideas, is to attribute to it either an understanding of its own, in that case above the intellect, or goes to shew that mind and soul are to all practical intents and purposes identical. How can the conclusion be avoided, that if the understanding be trained to accept a wrong view of God, the soul must accept the same? That if the intellect, for instance, assent to or deny miracles, the soul must do so as well? On one side, if we withdraw intellect altogether, the soul must remain blind, deaf and dumb; or, on the opposite, must exercise a supremacy over the intellect, and affirm or reject its conclusions, and according to Christian dogma, abide eternally by the consequences, whether for good or for evil. Compared with the soul, therefore, the intellect sinks into nothingness, for it is the soul after all which is the intellect of the

intellect—a proposition quite untenable. It must be granted, that the state of a man's soul at his death will be exactly such as the course of his life has rendered it, the reflex and registered result of all his experience and observation, his thoughts and his actions; and that the condition of all souls will differ as men differ. Practically then, the soul must be dealt with as the mind. For if it do not vary with the mind, or be not even subject to its operation, the soul must remain an immutable factor in men, incapable of instruction, and also be the same in all men taught or untaught. But in either case as to education, it is practically only the mind with which we have to deal, whether, as is unquestionable, the soul can only be reached through it—which places her in a secondary attitude—or the soul be an unalterable factor, in which case everything depends upon the mind, and the soul has none but a theoretical concern in our affairs. The same argument applies also to soul as a responsible agent.

Which may be the most 'precious' of the human components, is not worth while investigating. We know, however, how sadly pseudo-religion in times past snubbed, starved, whipped, maimed, and generally tormented the body, treating it like a very galley slave, rather than a faithful companion, and rousing it to take fearful revenges, wherefore the

idea of its lesser value is probably an ecclesiastical heritage. We know also that theology has made the soul eternally responsible for human thoughts and actions; and thus at once the master and the servant of the mind, without which it can neither know nor do anything. But what becomes then of the understanding? Body and soul are provided for either in heaven or hell; but the other mighty endowment? Are we to assume that a Newton, after a life spent in profound and faithful study of the works of God, enters upon the future state no further advanced Godward than the most ignorant and undiligent of men? It is surely very improbable. For if the soul reap the advantage of the training, why not the intellect; if the passive and tutored element be blessed, why not the active and responsible tutor? It is difficult, therefore, to conceive what office the soul may fulfil, unless, as it has been shown to be clearly a secondary and plastic element, it be in truth *the body of the mind.* In mundane transactions the soul rarely figures, being almost strange even to language, except in the case of persons who perish by accident, especially if that occur at sea, when the lost habitually all become souls immediately. We ascribe bad actions to bad-hearted or evil-minded but never to bad-souled individuals, because in fact the soul and the mind are effectually so much in the

same boat, that it has become merely an affair of nomenclature. And the assignment to man of body and mind only, vastly simplifies the treatment of these questions, and clarifies the customary fog. In any event, theology, which does absolutely nothing for it, has to account for the intellect, mind, or understanding, which if it be less precious than the soul, which is said to embark upon the dread unknown without it, is nevertheless here its only teacher and trainer. Perchance there has been a lurking fancy that knowledge is not, as Lord Bacon says, 'Power,'—but evil. Or if the soul, being responsible for human conduct, be presumed to hold independent communication with Almighty God, what is the good of the intellect at all, or the value of any of its experience? Certainly we do not possess two intellects, one devoted to the pursuit of abstract knowledge, and the other to the business of common life. A man resorts to the same source in deciding which train he will take, as what line of conduct he will uphold, whence his actions good, bad, or indifferent, arise, and never asks his soul any questions at all, nor could it, of itself, make him any answer if he did. It is the mind then, the seat of reason and conscience, that is really the subject of training or education; the mind, which is the sphere of wisdom and goodness, and all the higher attributes. Soul

may be more fitly relegated to the kingdom of the passions. But the higher powers govern the lower in the last resort; wherefore it is the mind which commands, and is responsible for the soul, and not the converse. It is the mind which is the subject of harmony with God, and contains the reflected light of His eternal attributes collected, like sunlight on a diamond, upon a central immortal principle, which upon the death of the body dawns upon another phase of existence, and rises, planet-like, with all its kingdoms of acquirement. The mind then has not in death to begin school again, but takes up the thread of its earthly career with all the advantages derivable from a good or wise condition here, all the disadvantages resulting from a bad or foolish one, so far as that does not arise from causes outside of its control, for no sane man would suppose that an idiot carries his idiocy with him beyond the grave. Finally, the mind retains and perhaps acquires tenfold consciousness of improved or vitiated powers, and in this probably consists its reward or its punishment, both alike great beyond any conception to be formed during this our pilgrimage.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BEYOND THE GRAVE.

Good and Bad are terms of only relative significance. To say, that one man is good, another bad, means, in effect, that the former is a much better man than the other; since no man is either absolutely good, or absolutely bad. The best of men dies with some weakness; the worst with some strength lingering about him. The vast majority, or 'common run' of mankind are about as good or as bad as each other; all, it may be, looking very much of a size and that no very large one to the eye of Eternal Wisdom. But God does not look for more than He bestowed.

It is no more possible to dissociate in language spirit from mind beyond, than upon the hither side of the grave. For the spirit or soul, call it what you will, the immortal personality of man, must according to the received doctrine, possess memory of its human actions; whence it would follow, that if death irretrievably fix the conditions of souls at the time of its occurrence, as the cyanide of potassium fixes

photographs, not only must the (relatively) good be made absolutely so by Divine fiat, upon their entrance into the spirit world; but the (relatively) bad absolutely bad also; and in any case, perfect happiness must be incompatible with memory of human error, unless through the operation of Divine forgiveness. For if a spirit know not *why* it is rewarded or punished, the moral essence of the processes evaporates, since reward and punishment, without reference to, or discrimination of cause, simply resolve themselves into mere pleasure or pain. A boy whipped without known rhyme or reason, as we say, suffers a wrong, not a penalty. The presence of memory then being essential hereafter, so also is that of mind, of which it is but a faculty. If there be pain in an estimable family circle on earth, which knows one of its members to be suffering penal servitude, what happiness could there be in an immortal one, knowing a missing member to be in hell, or even that any human soul was there in ceaseless torment? But that the relatively, the not entirely, bad (and absolutely bad dies no man) should on departure be made altogether so, that is, that God should deteriorate, should dash out whatever feeble light may be struggling even in the worst of human spirits, expressly to qualify it for endless, hopeless, and we may add useless agony, is a revolting theory,

equalled only by that other, which pre-supposes special endowment with immortal capacity for endurance of pain, which, rage it never so fiercely, never annihilates. Now this, granting that there were a system of specific reward and punishment as humanly understood (which the finality of the situation renders purposeless) even upon the pedagogic view of the matter, though that is mere birchrod and sugar-plum divinity, would not be justice, but vengeance. For the 'good' also, if there be no oblivion, there is no beatitude; if there be oblivion, no consciousness of reward; but with regard to this, repentance here, forgiveness hereafter must be taken into account. Received doctrines of religion represent the growth of the soul or spirit as being conclusively estopped by death, but the fact that that event arrives at a different age to every one, and irrespective of his state of mind, is entirely against the supposition, for otherwise death would be intolerably unfair, as precluding repentance. Life may be compared to a loom, from which Time rolls off the soul-woof such as it has been woven, and death submits it, just as interrupted, for Divine approval, some finer, some coarser, all suitable for various supernal uses in the economy of God's providence, but none to be frivolously contorted, shrivelled, or wasted in nether fires.

On the contrary, the uses beyond the grave may yet

immeasurably improve it all. It stands to reason, that even immortal spirits of a higher order than man's, must, by the mere fact of continuous existence, go on improving in the knowledge and love of God to all eternity; the theory then, that the development of the human spirit only, stops short upon the decease of the body, is in the last degree improbable, for in that event man would find himself a very dull and stupid spirit indeed in comparison with such mighty beings as have conceivably been in existence from long ere Earth was builded. Eternal punishment then cannot be a true doctrine, because, besides its incongruity with Divine love and wisdom, it involves the extinction of hope, and the deterioration of souls by the special act of God, a Being of infinite mercifulness and tenderness, not heedless even of the sparrow, which is in effect, to make Him commit everlasting murder, a consideration to be commended to those who hold Him to be the special author both of hell and of the Decalogue. With regard to 'punishment' in the common sense of the word, at all, as it has no legitimate object, when it can neither reform nor deter, and serves neither for repression or example, and vindictiveness being out of the question, there can be none; but there may undoubtedly be further probation, never a condition of perfect happiness, on the march towards the Ultimate Light,

on the part of those who, struggling vainly after all against irresistible attraction, have wilfully deferred entering upon it here, and who are thus, as it were, unexpectedly apprehended by death as deserters; for free will must, in a higher state, have yet a loftier scope, and there may still be circumstances, the outcome of eternal spiritual laws spiritually applied, to purify and educate the belated. But to suppose that the Almighty is holding perpetual sessions, or courts of revision and appeal, furnished with recording ledgers[1] *et hic genus omne*, is puerile; and the day of judgment merely a cloudy dream of the imagination which, even so, has deferred its arrival ages beyond the time anticipated by its projectors. For it is a Dies Iræ,[2] and Ira, as men understand it, in God is not. The major probability is that man enters upon the future state on an altogether higher level of being, rising from death into a superior world, the different positions in which may be determined by the comparative fitness of minds (or souls, if so you prefer it), as a result of their earthly training, and thus practically ensure the exaltation of the good and the subjection of the wicked. For to the wilful and unpre-

[1] *Pace* the memory and genius of Sterne.

[2] See Sir Walter Scott's beautiful translation. But to represent the Almighty as demolishing Nature, because men are troublesome, is unreasonable.

pared lovers of moral darkness, the tremendous access of light must constitute a real, but let us hope not endless, penalty.

That there is a dead intellectual level of equality among spirits, any more than among men, is not by any means likely. Even here, if genius *nascitur non fit* (we do not believe in bad genius), who shall say whence it comes to preside over any particular brain? Not to raise the vexed question of innate ideas, the sensation and reflection of Locke[1] are after all only inborn capabilities, and these immensely vary in different persons. Without speculating whether immortal spirits alight in periodical devolution from the Creator, which have elsewhere been endued with His love, and are sent to teach mankind;[2] it is at least as certain, that similar minds result from the process of the laws which govern the existence of the human race, little though we may understand them, as that Newton was born[3] in the year in which Galileo died; and it is possible that ages hence will witness intellectual powers to which any hitherto known would seem but Lilliputian. What may be the destined work of capable spirits is beyond conjecture,

[1] *On the Human Understanding.*

[2] See a lecture by Dean Stanley on Shakespeare, Galileo, and Calvin, in which, at any rate, he urges that God has never 'left Himself without a witness.'

[3] December 25, 1642.

but it is something probably more in harmony with the supreme energy of the Author of Nature, than the performance of everlasting musical adulation and fulsome psalmody—such as new laws to incept, new worlds to mould and to launch, suns to enkindle or to quench, and it may be the thoughts of demigods to guide. Such offices would appear, if not less figurative, still worthier objects of desire, than the Paradise held up to us, as Persian in conception as in name, which apparently consists in nothing but an interminable oratorio of perfect, though tuneful, indolence.

An everlasting hell as a place of punishment, where pain is inflicted for its own sake, with the devil for viceroy, is alien to the true idea of God. Is Space on fire with it, or of the planets which is Pandemonium? Is it Jupiter? Is it Uranus? What a horrible chimæra is a world of misery created by a benevolent God for the eternal torture of His hapless creatures! What a gloomy religion that, which can for a moment entertain such a doctrine! What an ineffable curse to the human mind the belief in it! It is the deification of cruelty; the pretended worship of a God of Love, upon the motive of absolute fear; the assignment of a 'local habitation and a name' to the utter negation of Divine Wisdom and Goodness, a Satanic parody of the Power and the

Majesty of the Almighty. For there He reigns—but only to torment without ceasing. There He creates —but only the everlasting renewal of pain. There order is disorder; benevolence infuriated hate; purity inconceivable foulness; God gone mad. Verily, if it were possible for anything to induce a belief in the devil and his machinations, it would be this very invention of hell. But it is only the hugest and worst of the monsters that have barked themselves out of the womb[1] of ignorance. It will not long now survive in any land to haunt the bed of death, or widen the acres of the Church. The renewal of the true idea of the Creator rises upon it like a sun, and dissipates the fell and poisonous mist, the phantom-peopled cloud that settled upon the imagination of man in his infancy;[2] and it reluctantly dwindles and departs with its spells, its soothsayings, its necromancies, and all its pantomimic apparatus of temptation, fiends, and torment, out of the very air of thought.

[1] *Paradise Lost.*

[2] How much we all owe to the good and brave Professor Maurice, who first opened effectual fire upon this stupendous imposture!

CHAPTER XIX.

BODY OR MIND?

JESUS, Arch-Educator of humanity, in spite of all obstacles, first re-established and proclaimed the true idea of God, by a veritably divine impulse emancipating himself from the trammels of Judaism, and, best, and greatest of martyrs, sealing His testimony with His blood. For in this sense His death was voluntary, that He could have avoided it by ceasing to teach, by becoming weary of well-doing, and bowing the knee to the Baal of the high priests, the scribes, and the Pharisees. Wonderful—for His life is more marvellous than any pretended miracle; Counsellor—for He pleaded for the character of God; and Prince, indeed, of Peace—for His religion was that of perfect love which casteth out fear. No one who truly accepts it will any longer trouble himself about the *calorics* of condemnation. The God of the Jews repelled mankind; the God of Jesus welcomes them with outstretched arms, into which, like a child previously deterred by a look of gravity mis-

taken for a frown, Humanity leaps with joy. That He was a man of God essentially good and wise is evident; and if mankind have the right to commemorate any human being with Divine honours (and verily they have assumed it in the case of His revered mother Mary) it was their duty to confer them above all men upon Him. We cannot accept M. Renan's idyllic [1] portraiture of Him, as a child of joy and sunshine, the spoiled darling of Galilean youths and maidens. On the contrary, His meditations were toned throughout with a pure sweet seriousness, amounting almost to melancholy. He indeed walked in light and beauty,[2] but they were peculiar emanations from the central altar of a mind over-brooded by the Spirit of God—a veritably celestial temple in which His ideas were the adoring saints, and His every thought an angel ministrant. But since He lived and died, the Grand Ideal has become obscured. His history, His teaching, and His memory have alike been loaded with a mass of fantastic inventions, which He would have utterly repudiated. Upon His lovely simplicity and humility have been erected a haughty creed of pomp and power and menace; Churches of crowns single, and crown triple, of hereditary purple and gold and kingly authority. The

[1] Popular edition of *Jésus*, by M. Renan. Michel Lévy Frères. Paris.
[2] 'She walks in beauty,' &c.—*Byron*.

fact, however, does not prove that these proud structures are of Jesus, who, even in these our days has again scarce anywhere to lay His head, and could he reappear on earth, would probably in some mode or other be crucified again the morrow.

The fact of the existence of dogmatic Christianity in its present form cannot be held as a proof of exclusively Divine origin. Mohammedanism also was comparatively successful, and the qualified success of both religions is owing not so much to their dogmas and their wonders, as to the higher moral standard their founders erected on the basis of a truer and purer conception of the attributes of the Almighty than they found in occupation of the field. No one, however, pretends to believe in Mohammedan or Buddhist miracles, except the votaries of the several creeds. And the same is true of Christian marvels. Whence, as all men think no faith miraculous but their own, it follows that the great majority of miracles are rejected by the great majority of mankind. In short, just as the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath, so wonder was made for religion, and not religion for wonder. True faith lies in belief in God and the fulfilment of duty to Him and to mankind, and in this all known religions worthy of the name concur. Thus, while the personal adoration of Christ and of Mahomet is of a limited character, the worship of

God is universal like Himself, the only King of kings. It is impossible to add to or subtract from this sole Majesty, by the veneration as Almighty of any one besides. Can the Absolute Whole be enhanced by the addition of parts, or God be made the greater by association with deified men? Mankind probably early took to heart the seemingly immeasurable distance from them of God, above that shining wilderness of stars; were chilled by the awful impassibility and regularity of Nature, checquered with what they deemed to be dark fits of stupendous passion, and by her indifference to human decay. They therefore pined for a nearer Lord with acknowledged human sympathies; one who, at any rate, had been human; who knew them, and whom they had known; and who, once returned to the heavens, would thus be more merciful and more prone to enter into the sorrows of their hearts. At least such a divine man would mediate for them with the tremendous and unapproachable Creator, Whom but to look upon, they were told, was to die; the idea of Whose ultimate and originative superiority, even then, with a filial feeling not all frightened away, they marked with the title of Father, bestowing upon the newer and younger divinity that of Son. Perfect Humanity idealised thus became the Son of God, and united heaven and earth at last in an almost visible bond of union.

What then remains? Is it possible that there can be no better than a non-natural meaning to be extracted from the reported events of Christianity? May not the alleged occurrences be capable of some natural explanation, or even after all be allegorical, just as most of the teaching and wisdom of Jesus lies couched in parables? The miraculous deeds related *of* our Lord, after His death, are, necessarily, no more to be literally interpreted than the parables spoken *by* Him, during His life. Yet who has ever ventured to accuse Him of falsehood, because the kings and husbandmen of His divine fables may never even have existed in the flesh? But our Lord did live, and did teach. If, then, living Jesus said (*a*) 'Faith can lift mountains,' that is, 'confidence in God is able to overcome any spiritual Mount Difficulty, or Giant Despair:'[1] or again (*β*) 'There was a certain king, who desired to remove a mountain, which barred the light of heaven from his people:' or if (*γ*) of Himself it should later have been written —'and *Jesus* said unto the mountain, Rise thou, in the name of My Father, from the earth, that the free air of heaven may float in among men. And the mountain rose, and the fresh winds blew, and all men rejoiced'—and this is precisely what our Lord did for mankind—are not these three, as spiritual lessons, intrinsically and equally *true*, albeit (*a*) is but

[1] *Pilgrim's Progress.*—Bunyan.

a noble figure of speech; (β), a parable; and (γ) an assumed fact? *Furthermore*, if the whole spirit of the Evangel place Jesus (as it does) in the attitude of one who had ever protested against 'gilding refined gold, and painting the lily,'[1] should we feel any hesitation in rejecting such a passage as the following?—'And there was a lily that grew over against the porch. And Jesus took a brush, and when he had dipped it, He painted the lily. And His disciples marvelled greatly; and the lily opened her mouth and said, 'Why paintest Thou me, Thou that talkest of life and mercy, for I die?' And he answered and spake, Because thou puttest Solomon to shame:' or, further, if the Lord had said—as He might, and perhaps did—'Know ye not that there is no common daily gift of life'—like water—'or common bond of relation'—like marriage—'which love and faith in God cannot change into a rare and precious blessing, the very fount of happiness,' and if departed—it be narrated of Him that, at the spousals of Cana, *He turned water into wine*—is there any real difference as to the purport of the lesson conveyed? For the object of all these sayings and deeds is to teach, and if they do not teach, they become as nothing. The physical wonders, therefore, of the biography may practically correspond to, and be but

[1] 'To gild refined gold, to paint the lily.'—*Shakespeare.*

the incorporation of the sublime oral instruction of His actual life; the Parable is the breathing shape—the Miracle, the embalmed body of His holy wisdom; and they are related to each other as the statue to the living or dead orator. Did His known preference of the parabolic form suggest to His devoted school to apply it also to the narration of His biography? Let us consider.

And first we may reflect that a man, in relation to other men, is, to all intents and purposes, his mind, rather than his body; and nextly, that the things which concern the mind are necessarily altogether superior to those which affect the body. Millions of people have never seen nor listened to a certain noble statesman, but through the agency of the press are well aware that he is a great master of practical wisdom and uncommon common sense. They possess a perfectly clear mental photograph of him. If they speak of him, therefore, it is as mind; the corporeal part, height, shape, or hue of complexion, does not, at any rate in comparison, attract a thought. And this is true in all cases unless, for the sake of exactitude, we except, for instance, professed athletes, in which case the bodily attributes acquire special significance.

Now nothing can be more clear than that it is the mind (under which word, for reasons set forth, we

include the immortal principle or spirit, which if they be not inseparably blended, coincidently inhabits the mind) of Christ, which must be essential subject of meditation; all indeed that we venerate by that sublime name. Let us dwell then upon Jesus as mind; and neither as form or body, nor a confused combination of spiritual and material attributes.

The Almighty is indeed the Father of all minds. But here was One, taking all circumstance into view, immensely beyond that of other men, replete with wisdom and goodness from its early dawn, so much so as to strike all in communication with it as extraordinary, indeed superhuman. What, then, was more natural than to think, and from associating with Him to come to believe, that He must be nearer to divine Wisdom and Goodness than others? and that just as men say of one who more closely than usual reproduces the qualities of a gifted parent, 'he is the true son of his father,' Jesus was the true son of God? Consider His profound obedience and entire reverence, His exaltation above the petty objects of life, His astonishing penetration of subtleties and sophistries, His contempt for means of violence to further moral ends, His spirituality altogether, and is it not true, that if we be all in a general sense the sons of God, He was worthy to be called *the* Son by predilection, and that the more men come to resemble Him, the

more will they intensify their filial relation to the Universal Father?

Next as to His birth—still as mind. No idle mocker has ever raised a question as to His purity, and all-prevailing 'sweetness and light'[1] of character; no fabled Sir Galahad has ever been claimed to be an equal prototype of the virginity of manhood, or as having led a life more severely self-denying and devoted. What more likely than that in a land where metaphors bloomed like the flowers, He should have been early described as the perfect embodiment of mental chastity, so pure, that even the mother of such a man might well have been esteemed a virgin?—Himself a very 'virgin's-child' among men?

The lesson designed to be conveyed by the acts of power attributed to Him, may be but an allegory of wisdom, goodness and purity in operation. These indeed *can* raise the corrupting minds, not bodies of men, if they will but have faith to make trial of their efficacy, from the seeming death of spiritual ignorance; no, there is no one so dead and buried in trespasses and sins, but that Almighty Goodness can again raise him to life, to a true perception of rectitude; much more may the morally sick be rendered whole, the paralytic sound, the blind be made to see.

[1] Matthew Arnold.

But such sick and dead as these, depend upon the self-sacrifice and devotion of the Best, even to the wearing out and destruction of the body, as instrumental, according to the laws of God—of which education is one—to their resuscitation and recovery. There are crises too, when a nation, when all mankind, as when Greece had fallen and Rome was beginning to reel, call for heroic assistance, for the extreme patience and gentleness that will bear with persecution, with the scourge and the mocking thorns; for the courage that will face bodily torture and the last agonies of the scaffold, to redeem men from the tyranny of corrupt ideas, from the oppression of false teaching, and from vile and slavish persistency in error, in alienation from the true understanding of God. What then is this, but the real essence of an eternally true doctrine of Atonement?

The ingratitude, the hardheartedness, the bitter cruelty of those whom He would have rescued from their gross superstition; proffered love rejected, purity derided, benevolence stigmatised as hypocrisy, wisdom accused of mendacity, these constituted the Crucifixion of the true, of the Mind Jesus, imposing sufferings far greater and longer enduring than any to be ascribed to a mere corporeal execution, however agonising.

The return of such an Immortal Mind to God who gave it, the utter powerlessness of death and the grave[1] to bury His supreme light, the impossibility of His spiritual corruption, these are the Resurrection, the triumph of the mind, not the body of the Son of Man. I go to My Father. But when a dying man says he hopes to enter upon the heavenly rest, is he immediately thinking of the body? No, Jesus undoubtedly alluded to *Himself*, as do all men, to His immortal mind or spirit.

Overwhelmed with grief at their loss, scattered in fear and trembling; probably oppressed by want and in danger; their affection dwelling ever upon the memory of the beloved Master; utterly shocked and almost deranged by witnessing the cruel torments of His murder; what more likely than that, day after day, night after night, the endeared Form should have stood before them in their weary watchings and unquiet slumbers, fixed indelibly as it was upon their minds even in their most wakeful moments? They must have seemed to meet Him at every turn. He must have inhabited their very thoughts. Did not they too feel as men under similar circumstances have since done, as if it were all a frightful dream? Did not they, too, start from uneasy couches, to

[1] O grave, where is thy victory?—*St. Paul.*

behold Him, through the ghostly atmosphere of half-awakened senses, fade slowly from some beckoning attitude of love into the outer darkness? Is it not likely that they conferred upon such presumed, but most naturally presumed visits, relating how they had even touched Him, and how that He had spoken, Thomas indeed, having first doubted it were not an apparition, probing the very wound in His side? But it was precisely *with the wounds* that the phantom would appear, for seeing that the image most impressed upon them must doubtless have been that of the revered Master bleeding upon the cross, this was the most likely form to haunt their minds, and especially would account for the alleged reappearance with the wounds *still open.* Such then might be the origin of the Revisitation.

Why should it not be commemorated? But to the corporeal incident, the Emmaän lapse is absolutely fatal. For had our Lord returned from the dead as God, His narrative *must* have come down to posterity. In a word, the New Testament would have consisted of that, and that alone. Unless, indeed, Ignorance had succeeded in gilding even this absolutely refined gold also.

But a time arrived when they became calmer, and the violence and perturbing influence of grief sub-

sided. The beloved One seemed to return to them at longer intervals, and then at last no more. Further incidents of the kind ceased to be narrated, and commented upon among them. He had then, alas! gone, and they would see Him never again upon earth. But whither? As He had said, He could only have gone finally to the Father. Such probably was the real basis of the Ascension.

It is surely a more true and a sublimer conception that of Almighty mind or spirit, as the Father of immortal minds or spirits, than, in a human sense, of mere perishing bodies. Nor, by analogy, is there anything difficult of belief (in view of the existing diversity of minds) in the fact that God, a Being without body, parts, or passions, should in effect be the Parent of one or more spirits in a more particular sense than of all spirits in general. For what would Eternal Power, Love, and Wisdom beget, but their resemblances? That is a natural inference, agreeable to the analogy of divine operations; but the begetting by an immortal spirit of mortal bodies, the original creation of which is quite a different thing, is a non-natural conclusion. Viewed upon this principle, the events became far more intelligible and more instructive. Applied to Jesus as Mind, they have a meaning for ever and ever; as body, they are manifestly contrary to that principal eternal ray of

His own all-abundant Light, reason, in its highest signification, which the Almighty has bestowed upon man, but withheld from the lower animals, whether apes, or the offspring of plasm, through all its protean genealogy.

CHAPTER XX.

TRINITY IN UNITY.

Of all forms of Revelation, reason—not the art of reasoning, with which many appear to confound it—being the chief, all books, any book, The Book itself, are proper subjects for its exercise. If the sacred narrative seem to be not consistent in some aspects, it is, as we have earlier observed, the part of wisdom not to irreverently reject it, but to seek to discover in what light it presents a fully harmonious bearing. It cannot be allowed that the mind—comprising the reason, the conscience and the spirit of mankind, intimately blended together—abdicated her functions upon the completion of the Testaments, or has at any time since that day forfeited her right to review the processes of her past emanations, of which these justly venerated writings are, in respect of their subject-matter, by far the most momentous. The law, that to cease from growth is practically to commence decay, applies to the reasoning powers as well as to the body of man. It is to be hoped that a

more enlightened method of interpreting the Scriptures will come into existence, and that the mighty tree, which has sprung from the good seed sown in Palestine, will yet, freed from dead wood and disfiguring and useless fultures, immensely increase in majesty and beauty, and project the shadow of God's everlasting Truth alone upon the parched and weary world.[1] But dogmatism assumes finality, and has even audaciously pretended to buttress the Verities of the Allwise, as though they indeed could be weak, with the flints and rubble of its own specious quarrying. That the human mind, however, achieved finality two thousand years ago, and was turned away from the gates of the school of God as one who could learn from Him no more, is a theory manifestly contrary to fact.[2] For the acquirement of full knowledge of an Omniscient and Omnipotent Creator, of which man is yet lagging ages behind, demands a much further and practically immeasurable expansion of thought.

The probable origin of Gospel discrepancies, is that men, unquestionably devout and honest in intention, being impressed with the belief that He was the bodily Son of God, endeavoured to continue the

[1] Weary, that is, of 'vain disputations.'

[2] Pascal, however, declares theology to be a fixed science incapable of growth.—*Pensées.*

structure which Jesus had founded, and had raised to His own height above the ground;[1] and thus they achieved, under the influence of that view, a work which has proved to be in some respects their own. The Divine Philosopher was no longer at hand to be consulted. They therefore spoke and acted for Him, and shaped the edifice to accommodate their creed. He had thought only of God, not of Himself; but His disciples naturally sought to supply that omission. Circumstances arose in which there was a conflict between His original design and their continuation; these had to be harmonised, and, inasmuch as *les absens ont toujours tort*, the method and scope of the Master's project, sometimes perchance unconsciously, sometimes by seeming accident, were considerably varied. Here crept in another window, there another door; one suggested more columns, a second friezes bearing a sculptured legend, a third polychromy. Now, if an architect be dead, soon after the commencement of his work, (the illustration becomes still stronger if we take several such unexpected deaths consecutively) and the successor appointed to carry it on receive his plans and elevations, and figure his own alterations upon them, but still, desiring 'to design with beauty and to build in truth,'[2] in the

[1] Was it not enough?

[2] Motto composed by the author for the Architectural Association in 1850.

spirit of the original, the edifice nevertheless goes by the name of the first contriver, and to him are alike attributed the glory or the blame. Thus then has the grand Cathedral of the Mind founded by Jesus been dealt with by posterity. Is it not literally as well as metaphorically true? With whose figure, last as yet of many, has the most ancient and predominant church even recently sought to fill the chair of the first and only Grandmaster of the Christian faith? Is it that of Jesus? No. Of Peter? No. Of whom then? The living successor of Hildebrand.[1] The English nation, long since determined never to have the self-styled inheritor of any Apostle paraded in the vacant tribune brought to this island by St. Augustine; and actuated by a just spirit of veneration for the memory of One Whose place no man is worthy to occupy, assigned the charge of it to the Monarch, in trust for future ages, and in defence alike of faith and of liberty. The empty chair of Christ is very touching and moving to the heart; but infinitely more so if, felt although unseen, His Spirit be not enthroned upon it still.

Shall we then be debarred by mere forms of creeds, whether the work of St. Athanasius or others, from contemplating the beautiful spectacle of the Love of

[1] Gregory VII., the real originator of Ultramontanism. For a fine sketch of his life and times see a Lecture by the late Right Hon. Sir J. Stephen, K.C.B.

God engaged on earth in the moral and spiritual education of man? The real, the true 'strong Son of God'[1] then, is, let us believe, this same Immortal and Eternal Love, which, while moving enshrined in the outward form of a man among men, endures all things in the inculcation of faith in the Goodness and Wisdom of the Almighty, and displays veritably celestial spiritual Power, in animating its human medium to withstand all weakness from within and from without, the liability to which springs from the necessary conditions of earthly existence. Pain, in all its forms, vainly endeavours to distract his attention, or destroy his courage. For him death has no agony; corporeal corruption no ideal repulsiveness, and the grave serves but to record by its perpetual emptiness the disengagement of the faithful spirit from the body, the true Resurrection. Is not this description absolutely applicable to the life and character of Jesus? His religion, therefore, is true; but much of the machinery fashioned and put together after His bodily death, betrays, but too evidently, that the Hand and Mind of the master are absent, that He is dead, that He has risen indeed. But eternal principles eternally abide; and if the Spirit of Love promised by the voice of Jesus to send the Spirit of

[1] Tennyson.

Truth, to continue still the education of the world—has it not come to pass? Has any subsequent age been wanting in minds determined to maintain a pure conception of the character and attributes of the Most High, in spite of all obstacles and penalties imposed by Churches, too similar indeed to those by means of which Judaistic theology endeavoured to turn Jesus from the purpose of His life, yet was defeated even by Death himself, whom its fell expositors invoked to aid them?

That the esoteric view of religion here put forth may be, after all, not remote from truth, rests upon its strong harmony with divine fact, and its consonance with the unimpeachable Morality of God. Let us summarise. That Divine Eternal Love may fitly be called the Son of God, an All-benevolent Being, begotten of His Power and Purity, is true. That Divine Love may appear, has appeared upon earth in the minds of supremely gifted men, in One incomparable mind at least, to become through them expressly manifest to the general understanding of mankind, is true. That Humanity in the visible agents must be an imperative condition of any such hallowed work, is true. That the testimony must, according to all analogy from history, be maintained and witnessed to by the most exalted self-devotion, is true. That Divine Love, the Son, is constantly returning to the

Father, as He is ever emanating from Him, is true; that He perpetually is extant upon earth, having associated with Him the Spirit of Truth, is true; and that He humanly lives, labours, and suffers for the redemption of mankind from ignorance, is true.

It is still impossible, and never has been possible, for human thought to refer to the Personality of the Almighty otherwise than through His Attributes; which even taken collectively, are not, strictly speaking to be deemed Himself; but so grouped as in life and operation, they are, so far as may be comprehended by human reason. The All-sublime essence in which they abide, to us impalpable, invisible, is doubtless the same and self-consistent for them all.

As Father then may be regarded the All-benevolent Power from Whom, in order, all things originate. This is the Paternal Aspect[1] of God.

As Son and Saviour the Love which, in perfect purity, unites the Father with, and draws to Him mankind. This, as inspiring corresponding human love and obedience is, for man, the Filial and Redeeming Aspect of God.

[1] It is suggested that this word renders with some precision the Greek word πρόσωπον (*i.e.* 'face towards,' = 'aspect'), and is also much nearer the Latin 'persona' than our word 'person,' which in its present sense is clearly a mistranslation, and the source of endless confusion, rendering what is really in itself intelligible, utterly impossible and incomprehensible.—See *The Athanasian Creed*, by A. P. Stanley, D.D., Dean of Westminster.

As Holy Spirit, the Wisdom[1] which, in truth, is the essential vehicle of the Divine government and sustentation of the Universe. This is the Holy-Spiritual, or Hagiological, Aspect of God.

The special characteristic, then, of God Eternal Power, is Order: of God Eternal Love, Purity: of God Eternal Wisdom, Truth. The general characteristic of All is Benevolence.

If the combination of These in infinite living light and perfection be not God, whether regarded (for absolutely *known* by mortal man He cannot be) as Une or Triune, there is, as the fool hath said in his heart,[2] no God.

Seeing then that Power, Love, and Wisdom are the three leading ever-existing principles, yet dwelling in indissoluble unity in ONE PERSON, this, according to reason, constitutes a true and comprehensible Trinity in Unity.

Almighty Power, the all-good, all-creative, is evidently the first, or so to say, eldest Principle, although time, after any mode of human computation, is out of the question. But Power, in its relations to creation, and its government of the world, being instinct with benevolence, reproduces Itself, in purity, (and here probably lies the foundation of the theo

[1] 'Knowledge is Power' (*Bacon*) i.e., the HOLY GHOST is GOD.
[2] DAVID.

logical idea of virginity),[1] as Love, for life[2] itself is an imperishable delight for ever: and Love so engendered is Filial in respect to Power, from its 'obedience' to, or rather absolute agreement with the behests of the first Principle, and the exact fulfilment of its requirements in harmony with good. Power and Love in combined operation reveal themselves as Wisdom, for all Their work is alike as perfect and self-consistent in execution as it is in aim.

On the contrary, it is clear, allowing for the insufficiency of human language—'magnâ prorsus inopiâ humanum laborat eloquium,'[3] that neither Love

[1] But ages even B.C., Minerva, supreme Mind, Wisdom, or Knowledge, daughter of the pure Brain of Zeus (Divine Power), was Virgin. Greece, therefore, worshipped at that time no unknown, but the only known God, in His attributes. In our Lord, however, Divine Love became equally manifest, and so to say, *arrived*, to join Power and Wisdom, and complete the Revelation of God to Man.

[2] Life even on earth may be enjoyed for the best part of a century; death is but an affair of a few days or minutes.

[3] St. Augustine. How well fitted the Saint was to discuss '*humanum eloquium*,' the following passage—which will interest many—will prove:—'Quid est ergo non solum eloquenter, verumtamen sapienter dicere, nisi verba in submisso genere sufficientia, in temperato splendentia, in grande vehementia, veris tamen rebus, quas audiri oporteat adhibere? Sed qui utrumque non potest—dicat sapienter quod non dicet eloquenter, potius quam dicat eloquenter, quod dicet insipienter. Si autem ne hoc quidem potest, ita conversetur, ut non solum sibi præmium comparet, sed etiam præbeat aliis exemplum, et sit ejus quasi copia dicendi forma vivendi.' xxviii. 61. For examples of the styles, see *Aug.* xx. 39; Cyprian, in *Ep.* lxiii., *ad Cæcilium de Sacramento calicis; In Tractatu de disciplinâ et habitu Virginum*; and *Ep.* 1. *ad Donatum*; Ambrose, 1, *de SS. in prologo et de Virginibus. lib.*

nor Wisdom can be the primal cause of Power, nor Love, without Power, the cause of Wisdom, nor Wisdom, without Love, the offspring of benevolent Power. Love then is begotten of Power, Wisdom proceeds from them Both.[1] The order of the principles would therefore appear to be correct; and if this be not a theological Trinity, it is assuredly a moral and a true one. Nor does the substitution of 'spirit' for 'principle' at all invalidate the conclusion.

From these, if a human being may venture without irreverence to select, it was, and is God Eternal Love, the Son, the Saviour, Who reigned and Who now reigns in the MIND of JESUS, which is the true spiritual Church, having always by necessity an outward and visible constitution, with gifted expositors like St. Paul, Hooker, Luther, Stanley and Döllinger. Disestablished she will never be, and cannot be plundered. It is this Mind which is the real divine Mother of churches, the spiritual Holy Virgin Mary. Take God from God, and nothing but 'chaos and old night'[2] remains. But such a feat is a positive

ii. in principio; and SAINT PAUL: 1 Gal. iv. 10–20, 21–26, 1 Tim. 1; Rom. xii. 1; vi. 16; xiii. 7–14; 2 Cor. vi. 2, 10, 11; Rom. viii. 28–39. Younger readers should study the admirable *Belles Lettres* of Rollin.

[1] 'THE HOLY GHOST,' i.e. the Holy Spirit of Truth 'is of the FATHER' (Power) 'and of the SON,' (Love) 'neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but *proceeding*.'—*Creed of St. Athanasius.*

[2] Milton: concerning whose genius see Addison's noble Essays.

impossibility, on which all men may inviolably repose in most hallowed security on both sides of the grave.

But why then, some will ask, should not the ALMIGHTY have exhibited His physical power, as well as His love and His wisdom, in this supreme life? Because it is clear the ALMIGHTY would not confuse His own Persons, or Aspects. Being engaged in mercy, He would not attire Himself in the robes of His might; being on a work of divine education, as eternal wisdom, He assuredly would not stultify His immutable laws, that is to say, be other than Himself. Did not Holy Jesus refer the wondermongers to the lily? But as God the Saviour is rightly described in reference to God the Creator as Eternal Son, so far as men may dare (and humanity is courageous, no slave, but a reasoning subject) to apply to the ALMIGHTY any of the language of this great ant-hill, for like reason, by a natural transference of ideas, is Jesus justly named the Son of God, that human mind which was and is the especial child of the Divine mind; which once and for ever translated and transfigured itself in the Sermon on the Mount. And this is the true Transfiguration; the triumph of Christianity in the presence of the Law and the Prophets, the Mind of Jesus soaring above the genius of Moses and Elias upon the spiritual altitude of the Rock of Truth, the veritable Mount

of God; in comparison with which event the corporeal incident narrated is of minor importance, but may reasonably, and with strong probability, be held to symbolise exoterically the same glorious consummation.

The rite of infant baptism is necessary, since no man can be too early enrolled a scholar in the halls of God. True spiritual baptism, however, is repentance and reform of mind,[1] without which no man shall 'enter the kingdom of heaven,' that is, attain to a full conception of the glory of the FATHER. The body of our Lord, the bread of the holy Spirit of Truth, Truth Itself, *that* is His Body; and the principle of unlimited devotion and self-sacrifice in love and obedience to the Universal Maker, for the sake of Universal Man, *that* is His Most Precious Blood. The rite of the holy communion is truly the divine *supper*, for the acquirement of such a condition of spiritual blessedness, of Truth and Self-sacrifice, is the crowning act of the day of life, which once consummated, the good Man has no more to do than to await, like Maurice, the last hallowed earthly change—

> . . . . . 'as one
> Who wraps his robe about him, and lies down
> To pleasant dreams.[2]

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[1] *Meravola.*

[2] William Cullen Bryant, *Thanatopsis.*

CHAPTER XXI.

WIFE: MOTHER: SON OF GOD.

SUCH and so heavenly a man was JESUS. Has He not, in His own sole definition of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Truth, a proof of understanding grander than any miracle, afforded us an almost unerring clue? And what can be a more congenial idea to His, than to describe the FATHER as the Spirit of Power, the SON as the Spirit of Love? Does not His definition put an ineffaceable stamp upon His own Character? Was it not indeed the Filial One, the Eternal Spirit of Love, who reigned in Him, or is it strange that men should have come to believe that He was that Eternal Spirit Himself? Practically, there is no distinction. Given the age in which He lived, the nation to which He belonged, the condition of their education and religion at the time, the apparently weak moral state of the dominant empire, is not the proclamation of the Holy Spirit of God as Eternal Truth, a singular demonstration of the excellence and penetration of His mind,

the utterance of a deathless protest against the falsehood which hemmed Him in on every side, while men and gods alike were as inimical as they were mendacious? The ALMIGHTY, if, after all, He had been better known to the progenitors of the Scribes and Pharisees (an idea which a near examination of the Mosaic creed discountenances) had been almost completely lost sight of behind the dense mist of superstition which brooded over the petrified Hebrew mind of those days; but here was One, who with a touch unveiled the shrouded Majesty of Eternal Truth, and, as it were, striking the very rock of their stubbornness, let loose the living waters for all time.

Again, assuming that there is here afforded an approximately correct, however inadequate outline of the Eternal Idea of the ALMIGHTY, is it from such a BEING that we should have expected many of the thoughts and acts ascribed to HIM in Mosaic theology? Unquestionably not. In some parts, then, of Christian theology? Certainly, if any one still believe that such a POWER (even granting the human externals) performed the miracle at Cana, in order that the bridegroom might be complimented by the ruler of the feast; or that HE submitted, whether as the Spirit of Power, the Spirit of Love, or the Spirit of Wisdom, to be whisked about and baited by the

'devil;' that He tolerates, or associates or confabulates with an omnipotent or any kind of demon at all; or that He reversed the operation of His laws in this, or in the case of Lazarus, for manifestly inadequate ends: it is equally hopeless and useless to argue with him; but the reply is still, unquestionably not. With respect to our Lord Jesus, such a believer has one idea; we have another: let the enlightenment of the age decide between them.

Names taken from human blood-relationship should, however, be applied with discrimination, and always in a spiritual sense. Thus, although the appellation of Son as expressing the nearest relationship may representatively befit our Saviour as Mind, upon a spiritual view of the Christian theory, that of Mother of God, applied to St. Mary, is excessively inappropriate. The received doctrine, while taking upon itself to assert the fact of God having a mortal Son, proceeds even so to limit Him to the possession in any case of only one, a piece of amazing presumption, and represents that Only Mortal Son as born, notwithstanding His existence from all eternity, of a human being at an assigned period. But the word Son cannot be properly employed in any sense analogous to actual human sonship, but as only expressive of the closest derivative inter-relation, such indeed as that which Divine LOVE eternally

bears to Divine POWER. Human language, though this age is no less eloquent than any preceding one, must ever remain in despair of adequately describing the ALMIGHTY. It is difficult enough to grasp even one of His attributes; but besides ascribing to Him a mortal son, to add a mortal wife and mother, *these two latter being the same human person*, and probably a step-father, shows only to what extremity of confusion the mania for theological contrivance will proceed. For what is all that but a maze of foolish words of no meaning? Does then the bodily sonship stand upon any better ground than the bodily wifehood and motherhood? Not the least. The employment of the Archangel Gabriel, as a species of divine ambassador between the high contracting parties, is an intrinsically mundane fiction, borrowed from the practices of courts, and at once affords a measure by which the whole matrimonial theory may be justly estimated. What does the OMNIPOTENT, the OMNISCIENT, want with messengers, whether winged mercuries or dreams? We are far from asserting there are no saints or angels—but are they thus employed?

Having determined, under a misconception, to represent JESUS as the corporeal Son of GOD, and as death had sealed those truthful and loving lips, which else would have immediately and infallibly protested, it was necessary for the leaders of the

school—at what date cannot be ascertained—to devise, as they deemed it, adequate explanatory machinery. But it is of a fanciful description; and conclusively proves that they did not understand that non-nature affords no evidence of divinity at all. Besides which, our Lord, during His lifetime, must, if it were true, have known, and knowing would certainly have declared, the relation in which Mary His Mother stood to the ALMIGHTY; but it is abundantly clear that He did not look upon her in any light of the kind. There is not throughout His entire career one single trace of the far more than customary filial reverence which such a condition of affairs would have necessitated. On the contrary, many have unfairly imputed to Him a lack of ordinary respect. All that can be allowed is, that absorbed as He was in His holy meditations and celestial ideality, He exhibited no marked attention to her. In a word, St. Mary, the very keystone of the subsequently turned arch of pious invention, is a purely secondary figure through all the history. But if the solemn and awful situation in which, in her person, Womanhood stood to the Father of the Universe were true,[1] or even believed to exist, her being thus quietly pushed out of the circle is as incomprehensible as any miracle in the narrative. Even at that age of

[1] It *is spiritually*, but not *materially*, true.

the world, and even more then than now, would not a woman, credited with having borne a son to the Great God Himself, have been the object of unbounded veneration, far exceeding any ever paid to a queen or to a thousand queens? Sovereign indeed Her name has since been made, through the influence of a sublime feeling of gratitude honourable to the human heart, but in Her own day her Son and His followers took scarcely any public notice of Herself at all.

Now, since the things concerning the spirit are spiritual,[1] if there be any propitiation of God by bloodshed, it must be by the blood of the spirit or the mind, not the body, of man, though the latter has but too often been the melancholy concomitant. What then is the bloodshed of the Mind? It is the devoted expenditure of spiritual and intellectual vital energy in endeavouring to truly apprehend and realise our position and duty towards God, and the sacrifice of all lower aims and tendencies; to do this also for the sake of the education and happiness of others, at every risk and cost. Such human sacrifices are doubtless accepted and approved by the All-Holy One, for they constitute the instruments of the law by which He maintains the knowledge of His Truth upon earth. It is this self-devotion, this distilment of the very ichor of the soul, which for ever mediates

[1] St. Paul.

between HIM and man, and is HIS agent; this which, by the elevation of a continually purer system of belief and worship, and by the constantly increasing number of the reformed and the rescued, who in turn make, as St. Augustine says, but stepping stones of their dead selves to higher things[1]—this it is which is for ever atoning for the weakness, compensating the errors, and redressing the balance of Humanity.

The key then which these considerations supply will possibly, in the grasp of thoughtful minds, unlock many mysteries, and cause to silently revolve many a shrouded door which now apparently stands fast and dark between us and the All-living Light. It will aid to disclose the harmony of Reason and Faith; for that there could be any true belief in GOD, which is contrary to reason, is a self-conflicting misapprehension. Philosophy without faith, faith without knowledge, science without reverence, are all idle chimerse. Reason, therefore, whether applied to science, faith, or morals, reveals behind them the same all-wise FATHER, KING of kings and LORD of lords.[2] His natural, His moral, and His religious laws all accord. The human mind in its operations must perforce obey them to-day as of yore: now,

[1] Also *Psalm of Life*, Longfellow. Referred to again by Tennyson, *In Memoriam*.

[2] Hallelujah Chorus.

as in the time of our Lord Jesus or of Job; and hearken to His divine Voice, observe His celestial Hand, in the course of their constant education and government of mankind through the continual widening[1] of our thoughts and exaltation of our purposes and actions. That to forego the confusion of spiritual with material things, which has so long prevailed, may constitute a step in that training, is the more earnestly to be desired, because nothing tends so much to blur the outline of the lineaments of God,[2] so slowly imaged forth, little by little, and only from age to age, as the intrusion of the gross and darkling elements of superstition. But whoever shall attempt to contribute but a point of expression to that sublime Contour of Immortal Purity, Beauty, Majesty, let him forbear to dip his brush in materials of the earth, earthy—and, above all, in human blood. Let him reflect too, that to add but a scintilla of verisimilitude to the true Portraiture, even though to achieve this should be the result of the study of a life, and even then be little appreciated of men, is really more faithful and loving work, than to seek pompously

[1] 'For I know that through the ages an increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened by the process of the suns.'
TENNYSON.

[2] An immense expansion of the Divine Idea finally resulted, for instance, from Galileo's discoveries. See again Dean Stanley's Lecture on Shakespeare, Galileo, and Calvin, previously referred to.

to array the Eternal ONE in coronation robes and crown, and to depict HIM as throned upon the wings of a destroying blast, and encircled by a myriad gleaming archangelic spears, and lethal shafts of lightning. Leave purple and tribute to Cæsars, scourged, decapitated, or crucified men to Caliphs, chariots of war and thunder to Alexander, to Bonaparte or to Moltke, curses and comminations to the infallible Demigod of Rome; but to the Most Supreme FATHER proffer alone the petitions of subordinate spirits, praise only, and thanksgiving. Appeal, but for spiritual gifts—not for lands, money, and medical solicitude—not even for great guns and victory—to His Power, through His Love, in confidence in His Wisdom, and He will not withhold, He never has withheld, His Mercy, whether it alight upon us in life or in death. Mankind, so becoming more and more conscious of His Presence in this world, will the better realise Its full unshadowed glory beyond the portals of the grave.

CHAPTER XXII.

PRAYER, PRAISE, AND THANKSGIVING.

As it is clearly credible, indeed, certain in Reason, that the Divine Spirit can heed the supplications of human spirit (or as we have said throughout, effectively, mind), the maintenance of the practice of actual orison in words is right, a natural instruction proceeding from the mind in its government of the bodily organs, which will be served. The essence of prayer, whether public or private, is of course the intention, and the honesty of it. Without these, it is words, mere wanton words scattered down the wind. In like manner thanksgiving is the befitting expression of gratitude; and the commemoration of Divine Attributes, of faith. But though forms and language are but signs, and by no means the things signified, it is to be feared that, foregoing the employment of them, men would fall into habits of forgetfulness, from which the recurrence of public worship, at stated times, protects them. Established forms of

Religion, ably served and majestically ordered, are an absolute necessary of life to States. Besides, Prayer is a mighty instrument of education for the young (so they be not taught, by implication, to pray for toys) and of consolation to the mature—the first steps of the child, the last tottering of the dying man, towards the open arms of the All-loving FATHER. That therefore is misosophy which discourages spoken petitions to the Throne of Grace on the plea that a spirit cannot hear words.[1] Words in human assemblages are indispensable, even for mutual exhortation; but an Omnipotent Spirit can hear the spiritual utterances, and con the attitude of the kneeling thought which calls the corresponding external action into being. The proper objects of desire, through prayer, are spiritual; but to pray, from whatever motive, for the temporary suspension of the laws of nature, is folly. To look to have a train angelically kept waiting for a belated physician is, upon the whole, as reasonable as to pray for Queen's weather.

It is to be remarked that the Lord's Prayer is addressed solely to the ALMIGHTY FATHER, for it is essentially an address of LOVE to POWER—and contains no suggestion whatever of the doctrine of the Trinity. It is also an entirely spiritual petition, excepting perhaps, if we are to take it in its literal

[1] What ground is there for the supposition that GOD is deaf?

sense, the clause, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' which may be accounted for by the circumstance of the followers of our Lord having abandoned all work to accompany Him, and depending in consequence upon the adventitious aid of the faithful. Nor is there any reference to Himself as the Divine Mediator, nor to the efficacy of His own Name, such as that with which nearly all the prayers of the Church most naturally conclude.[1]

If, in accordance with the views before stated, a paraphrase be ventured of an immortal Prayer which will remain for ever unaltered, it would run as follows:—

Our Father Who inhabitest eternity, Hallowed be Thy Name; Full knowledge of Thee grant; Thy will be done on earth, as in Thy visible Presence. Give us day by day[2] the bread of Thy Holy Spirit; and, Forgiving us our trespasses, Teach us to forgive those who trespass against us. And Forsake us not in our weakness: But Deliver us from Ignorance.

For it is perfect knowledge of and obedience to God, which constitute the completed arrival of His kingdom in the spirit of man; His actually realised Presence which is Heaven; and in which, move, live, love, and obey Him all the spirits of the departed,

[1] As earlier observed, He thought only of God, not of Himself. Therefore men for ever think of Him.

[2]

according to their degree of Godward growth; therefore it is ignorance of and want of obedience to Him, which alone constitute evil, and a condition of conscious absence from His love (though His love be never absent from man) which corresponds to the idea of Hades, or even of hell.

In reference to a new Christian form of belief, it would necessarily vary from The Apostles' Creed, under the interpretation earlier suggested, as more nearly approaching the true meaning of the Religion of JESUS, undoubtedly the Sovereign Teacher and moral LORD of enlightened Humanity, now and for ever. It may be difficult to attempt the composition of a tolerant confession, but at least one free, if not from error, assuredly so from terror, may, with all deference to a very venerable form of words, of partly human arrangement, accordingly be suggested. And this it is, though doubtless it may be far better expressed.

I believe in GOD the FATHER ALMIGHTY, MAKER of the Heavens and Earth.

And in JESUS CHRIST HIS SPIRITUAL SON, our LORD, Who was inspired by HIS HOLY TRUTH, Born Man in pure wedlock of JOSEPH and Blest above all Women, MARY; Suffered in the reign of Tiberius CÆSAR;[1] Was

[1] It is surely time to leave Pilate to his Swiss Lake. 'Ce ne furent donc ni Tibère ni Pilate qui condamnèrent Jésus. Ce fut le vieux parti

crucified, died, and was buried by pious Joseph of Arimathea: Supreme Martyr to the Ignorance of Men: His Spirit entered into the joy of God the Father Almighty, with Whom He eternally abides, Whose hallowed Teaching and Example quicken the dead in trespasses and sins.[1]

I believe in the Holy Spirit of Truth, the Religion of Catholic Love revealed by Christ, the Communion of Saints in the very Presence of God, the Forgiveness of Sins, the divine Purification of the Mind, and the Life Everlasting.

What has been previously observed renders further explanatory comment superfluous. Only, with regard to St. Mary, merely to have been the Mother of such a Son, fully entitles Her to everlasting respect and dutiful commemoration from mankind. Moreover, in the Mother and the Son, Time has but exalted to the skies the purest and most touching of human relations, to vouch for ever, by their elevation, to Man's fixed belief in the Universal Father. In Their Persons celestial Womanhood and Manhood kneel ever in His Presence, in an attitude which pleads while it adores. And there is so much that is noble and beautiful associated with the Madonna,[2]

juif; ce fut la loi Mosaïque.'—*Renan.* And it is this Ancient Jew and his law of blood, of whom we are still to speak in 'whispered humbleness.' Οὐ, μὰ Δί!

[1] He is always 'coming,' and come. He is here.

[2] See Mrs. Jamieson's fine work.

to say nothing of the genius of Raffaelle, and of ITALY, that no thoughtful man would now desire Her dethronement, but will rest contented, so only that the very heaven of GOD and of JESUS be not invaded or obscured.

With regard to public offices, the direct worship of ONE GOD in no way tends to their disestablishment, or disuse; rather the contrary. Although HE dwells not in temples made with hands, none, at any rate consistently with a just maintenance of human self-respect, can be too noble in design, or chaste in decoration, for HIS worship.[1] Churches may be at least as fitly dedicated to Holy Wisdom and Holy Purity, as to St. Peter and St. Paul; and if the heavenly origin of Christianity be expressly commemorated, as it ever will and must, it should be principally in the name of the Founder, Divine Love, or JESUS; and ordinary canonised persons, with some exceptions, such as the Apostles and the Protomartyr Stephen, be relegated to a respectful distance. For greater men have died and lie obscure, although, like Shakespeare, they live for ever in the human mind and language. The exaltation, therefore, of so many problematical saints, tends only to excite disadvantageous comparisons.

[1] Against this principle the long national but irrational neglect of the great Sir Christopher Wren's greatest work, St. Paul's Cathedral, particularly offends.

Upon questions of ritualism, robes, music and architecture, it is beyond the scope of the present work to enter; but none can be too dignified, so only that they seek the Sublime through the Simple. The temples of God should, however, in no case be overrun with lewd and fantastic imagery of frantic beasts and fiends; any approach to the grotesque, within His most charmed and hallowed circle, constituting a species of moral and spiritual anachronism. Purity being a divine attribute, repulsive monstrosity sprawling upon steeples, or squatting and wriggling upon coigns of vantage, cannot be too heartily repudiated. A genuine reform of religion, which is inevitable, will doubtless not be without influence upon taste, and decorations associated in idea with impurity, vanity, and demonology, will have discreetly to avoid the House of the All-Bright God.

That convinced of the Holy Character and Mission of Jesus, it can be wrong to pray to become spiritually like Him in love and devotion to the Father of all men, none but a fanatic, or a fool, would maintain, or object to the commemoration of momentous crises in a Life which achieved the purification of the human mind, so only that it be free from implication of untruth and sheer materialism. And there are many becoming occasions, both in public and private life, for prayer, praise, and thanksgiving. But let us

cease to impute nonsense to the OMNISCIENT; to pester HIM about the weather, the crops, the cholera, or the national arms;[1] to disparage HIM with barbarous doctrinal crotchets in hymns of a patronising description; and let us avoid that undue familiarity with material blood, as a spiritual lavatory medium, with which so many songs of the kind are horribly disfigured. And though the rites and ceremonies attendant upon the adoration of the MOST HIGH cannot be too majestic, nor HIS ministers held in too high honour, the mode of celebration should in no case tacitly lead the people astray into expectation of a kind of interference which never takes place, or of favours which cannot be granted; nor incidentally instil lessons contradictory of HIS Eternal Truth, as embodied and manifested in all HIS laws. Nor will the nation suffer, but, on the contrary, immensely benefit, by so thoroughly desirable an amendment of its present somewhat aberrant imagination.

Those only who 'in the mind have suffered'[2] the long protracted agony of a war of thought; who have been driven step by step, inch by fiercely contested inch, from the cherished fancies alike of childhood and early manhood; who have had to unbuild[3] and rebuild

[1] If HE inform our spirits, the impress will be visible on our works, and victory still wait upon faith, wisdom, and courage.

[2] *Hamlet.*

[3] 'I arise and *unbuild* it again.'—*The Cloud*, Shelley.

all their presumed strongholds of belief; they alone can realise the reluctance with which a student comes at last to acknowledge defeat, and to follow in the wake of the inexorable conqueror. Imagination reigns over youth, alike delighting it with, and herself revelling in the marvellous; Judgment arrives with years and calmer meditation, and banishes her, in spite of many sighs and tears and ineffectual protests, as Aurelian expelled Zenobia from the lovely abode by the fountain and the palm, from a land of dazzling sunlight, but also of enchanting and deceptive mirage. But even so there is consolation, for it is better, as our great Poet-Laureate sings of his departed friend,[1] to have loved Imagination and have lost her, than 'never to have loved at all.' Yet just as courage and loyalty earlier prompt to the defence of our first genuine impressions, so also later, in a greyer and more austere mood, they enjoin the maintenance of resolved and final allegiance to conviction. When we come, at a mature age, to perceive that doctrines, taught to us and obediently accepted in our nonage, fall short by much of the True Ideal of God, silence, however golden, becomes impossible, and the truth must be avowed. The Character of the All-Holy One can indeed take care of Itself; it is never-

[1] Son of the gifted Hallam, author of the *Middle Ages* and *Constitutional History of England.*

theless the bounden duty of men, if they perceive education to be setting in a channel which they have themselves sounded with the profoundest study and anxiety, and discovered to be full of shoals, and hidden rocks and reefs, then either to warn off the life-freighted galleon, or to erect for her guidance what Eddystone beacons, low or lofty, they may be enabled to construct. Such has been the author's experience of Faith without, and Faith with Reason: such is his object, and he can but finally express a fervent hope that the arguments may all be considered by impartial and dispassionate minds in a similar spirit to that in which they are propounded. After all, what know we? We can but suggest; and we do.

THE END.

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ARNOTT'S Elements of Physics 11
Authority and Conscience 19
Autumn Holidays of a Country Parson 9
AYRE'S Treasury of Bible Knowledge..... 20

BACON'S Essays, by WHATELY 6
——— Life and Letters, by SPEDDING .. 6
——— Works, edited by SPEDDING 6
BAIN'S Logic, Deductive and Inductive 10
——— Mental and Moral Science 10
———on the Senses and Intellect..... 10
BALL'S Alpine Guide 23
BAYLDON'S Rents and Tillages 18
Beaten Tracks 22
BECKER'S Charicles *and* Gallus 24
BENFEY'S Sanskrit Dictionary 8
BERNARD on British Neutrality..... 1
BISSET on Historical Truth 3
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BOURNE'S Catechism of the Steam Engine. 18
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———Improvements in the Steam Engine 18
———Treatise on the Steam Engine .. 18
———Examples of Modern Engines .. 18
BOWDLER'S Family SHAKSPEARE 26
BOYD'S Reminiscences 4
BRAMLEY-MOORE'S Six Sisters of the Valleys..... 24
BRANDE'S Dictionary of Science, Literature, and Art..... 14
BRAY'S Manual of Anthropology 10
——— Philosophy of Necessity..... 10
——— on Force..... 10
——— (Mrs.) Hartland Forest 23
BROWNE'S Exposition of the 39 Articles.... 19
BRUNEL'S Life of BRUNEL 4
BUCKLE'S History of Civilization 4
BULL'S Hints to Mothers 28
——— Maternal Management of Children 28
BUNSEN'S God in History 3
——— Prayers 19
BURKE'S Vicissitudes of Families..... 5
BURTON'S Christian Church..... 4

Cabinet Lawyer 28
CAMPBELL'S Norway 22
CARNOTA'S Memoirs of Pombal 4
CATES'S Biographical Dictionary 5
——— and WOODWARD'S Encyclopædia 4
CATS' and FARLIE'S Moral Emblems 16
Changed Aspects of Unchanged Truths 9
CHESNEY'S Indian Polity 3
——— Waterloo Campaign..... 2
Chorale Book for England..... 16
Christ the Consoler 19
CLOUGH'S Lives from Plutarch 2
COLENSO (Bishop) on Pentateuch 21
COLLINGWOOD'S Vision of Creation..... 25
Commonplace Philosopher 8
CONINGTON'S Translation of the *Æneid*.... 26
CONTANSEAU'S French-English Dictionaries 8
CONYBEARE and HOWSON'S St. Paul 20
COTTON'S (Bishop) Life 5
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COPLAND'S Dictionary of Practical Medicine 15
Counsel and Comfort from a City Pulpit.... 9
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DYER'S City of Rome .....

EASTLAKE'S Hints on Household Taste 17
———Gothic Revival..... 17
Elements of Botany 13
ELLICOTT on the Revision of the English New Testament 19
——— Commentary on Ephesians 20
——— Commentary on Galatians 20
——— Pastoral Epist. 20
——— Philippians, &c. 20
——— Thessalonians 20
——— Lectures on the Life of Christ.. 20

Essays and Contributions of A. K. H. B..... 8, 9
EWALD'S History of Israel..... 20

FAIRBAIRN on Iron Shipbuilding..... 18
——'s Applications of Iron..... 17
—— Information for Engineers .. 17
—— Mills and Millwork..... 17
FARADAY'S Life and Letters..... 4
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HARTWIG'S Harmonies of Nature..... 13
—— Polar World..... 13
—— Sea and its Living Wonders .. 13
—— Subterranean World..... 13
—— Tropical World..... 13
HERSCHEL'S Outlines of Astronomy..... 10
HEWITT on Diseases of Women..... 14
HODGSON'S Theory of Practice..... 10
—— Time and Space..... 10
HOLLAND'S Recollections..... 5
HOLMES'S System of Surgery..... 15
——Surgical Diseases of Infancy.... 15
Home (The) at Heatherbrae..... 24
HORNE'S Introduction to the Scriptures.... 20
How we Spent the Summer..... 22
HOWITT'S Australian Discovery..... 23
——Mad War Planet..... 26
——Rural Life of England..... 23
——Visits to Remarkable Places.... 23

HÜBNER'S Memoir of Sixtus V..... 2
HUGHES'S (W.) Manual of Geography.... 11
HUME'S Essays..... 10
——Treatise on Human Nature..... 10

IHNE'S Roman History..... 2
INGELOW'S Poems..... 25
—— Story of Doom..... 25

JAMESON'S Saints and Martyrs..... 16
—— Legends of the Madonna..... 17
—— Monastic Orders..... 16
JAMESON and EASTLAKE'S Saviour..... 17
JARDINE'S Christian Sacerdotalism..... 1
John Jerningham's Journal..... 26
JOHNSTON'S Geographical Dictionary..... 11
JONES'S Royal Institution..... 4

KALISCH'S Commentary on the Bible..... 7
—— Hebrew Grammar..... 7
KEITH on Fulfilment of Prophecy..... 20
—— Destiny of the World..... 20
KERL'S Metallurgy..... 18
RÖHRIG..... 18
KIRBY and SPENCE'S Entomology..... 13

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Leisure Hours in Town..... 8
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LEWES' History of Philosophy..... 3
LIDDELL and SCOTT'S Two Lexicons..... 4
Life of Man Symbolised..... 16
LINDLEY and MOORE'S Treasury of Botany 13
LONGMAN'S Edward the Third..... 2
—— Lectures on the History of England..... 2
—— Chess Openings..... 28
LOUDON'S Agriculture..... 18
—— Gardening..... 18
—— Plants..... 18
LUBBOCK on Origin of Civilisation..... 13
Lyra Germanica..... 16, 21

MACAULAY'S (Lord) Essays..... 3
——History of England..... 1
——Lays of Ancient Rome..... 25
——Miscellaneous Writings..... 9
——Speeches..... 7
——Complete Works..... 1
MACLEOD'S Elements of Political Economy 7
—— Dictionary of Political Economy..... 7
—— Theory and Practice of Banking 27
MCCULLOCH'S Dictionary of Commerce.... 28

MAGUIRE's Life of Father Mathew 5
——— Pope Pius IX..... 5
MALET's Overthrow of the Germanic Confederation by Prussia..... 2
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MARSHALL's Physiology..... 15
MARSHMAN's Life of Havelock 5
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MASSINGBERD's History of the Reformation 4
MATHEWS on Colonial Question 7
MAUNDER's Biographical Treasury..... 5
——— Geographical Treasury 11
——— Historical Treasury 4
——— Scientific and Literary Treasury..... 14
——— Treasury of Knowledge..... 28
——— Treasury of Natural History 13
MAXWELL's Theory of Heat..... 11
MAY's Constitutional History of England.. 1
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MENDELSSOHN's Letters 5
MERIVALE's Fall of the Roman Republic.. 3
——— Romans under the Empire 2
MERRIFIELD's Arithmetic & Mensuration. 11
——— and EVER's Navigation.... 11
METEYARD's Group of Englishmen..... 5
MILES on Horse's Foot and Horseshoeing.. 27
——— Horses' Teeth and Stables 27
MILL (J.) on the Mind..... 9
MILL (J. S.) on Liberty 6
——— on Representative Government 6
——— on Utilitarianism..... 6
MILL's (J. S.) Dissertations and Discussions 6
——— Political Economy 6
——— System of Logic..... 6
——— Hamilton's Philosophy..... 7
——— Subjection of Women..... 6
MILLER's Elements of Chemistry 14
——— Hymn-Writers 21
——— Inorganic Chemistry 11
——— Songs of the Sierras..... 25
MITCHELL's Manual of Architecture 17
——— Manual of Assaying 18
MONSELL's Beatitudes..... 21
——— His Presence not his Memory 22
——— 'Spiritual Songs'..... 21
MOORE's Irish Melodies 25
——— Lalla Rookh 25
——— Poetical Works 25
MORELL's Elements of Psychology 10
——— Mental Philosophy..... 10
MULLER's (MAX) Chips from a German Workshop 9
——— Lectures on Language 7
——— (K. O.) Literature of Ancient Greece 2
MURCHISON on Liver Complaints..... 15
MURE's Language and Literature of Greece 2

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New Testament, Illustrated Edition 16

NEWMAN's History of his Religious Opinions 5
NIGHTINGALE's Notes on Hospitals 23
——— Lying-In Institutions..... 23
NILSSON's Scandinavia 13
NORTHCOTT's Lathes and Turning 17

ODLING's Animal Chemistry 14
——— Course of Practical Chemistry.. 14
——— Outlines of Chemistry..... 14
O'DRISCOLL's Memoirs of MACLISE..... 4
Our Children's Story..... 25
OWEN's Lectures on the Invertebrata..... 12
——— Comparative Anatomy and Physiology of Vertebrate Animals 12

PACKE's Guide to the Pyrenees 23
PAGET's Lectures on Surgical Pathology .. 15
PEREIRA's Elements of Materia Medica .. 16
PERRING's Churches and Creeds 19
PEWTNER's Comprehensive Specifier 28
PHILLIPS's Story of Buddha..... 25
Pictures in Tyrol..... 22
PIESSE's Art of Perfumery 18
PRENDERGAST's Mastery of Languages.... 8
PRESCOTT's Scripture Difficulties 21
Present-Day Thoughts..... 9
PROCTOR's Astronomical Essays 10
——— New Star Atlas 11
——— Plurality of Worlds 11
——— Saturn and its System 11
——— The Sun 11
——— Scientific Essays 12
Public Schools Atlas (The) 11

RAE's Westward by Rail..... 23
Recreations of a Country Parson..... 8
REEVE's Royal and Republican France .. 2
REICHEL's See of Rome 20
REILLY's Map of Mont Blanc 23
RIVERS' Rose Amateur's Guide 13
ROGERS's Correspondence of Greyson..... 9
——— Eclipse of Faith..... 9
——— Defence of ditto..... 9
ROGET's English Words and Phrases..... 7
RONALD's Fly-Fisher's Entomology 26
ROSE's Ignatius Loyola 2
ROTHSCHILD's Israelites..... 20
RUSSELL's Pau and the Pyrenees..... 22

SANDARS's Justinian's Institutes 5
SAVILE on the Truth of the Bible 19
SCHELLEN's Spectrum Analysis..... 11
SCOTT's Lectures on the Fine Arts 16
——— Albert Durer 16
SEEBOHM's Oxford Reformers of 1498 2
SEWELL's After Life..... 24
——— Amy Herbert 24
——— Cleve Hall..... 24
——— Earl's Daughter..... 24
——— Examination for Confirmation .. 21

SEWELL's Experience of Life 24
——— Gertrude..... 24
——— Giant 24
——— Glimpse of the World 24
——— History of the Early Church 4
——— Ivors..... 24
——— Journal of a Home Life..... 24
——— Katharine Ashton..... 24
——— Laneton Parsonage 24
——— Margaret Percival 24
——— Passing Thoughts on Religion .. 21
——— Poems of Bygone Years 26
——— Preparations for Communion.... 21
——— Principles of Education..... 21
——— Readings for Confirmation 21
——— Readings for Lent..... 21
——— Tales and Stories 21
——— Thoughts for the Age..... 21
——— Ursula..... 24
——— Thoughts for the Holy Week.... 21
SHORT's Church History..... 4
SMART's WALKER's Dictionary 8
SMITH's (J.) Paul's Voyage and Shipwreck 20
——— (SYDNEY) Miscellaneous Works.. 9
——————— Wit and Wisdom 9
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STRICKLAND's Queens of England..... 5
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TRENCH's Ierne, a Tale 24
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TYNDALL on Diamagnetism..... 11
——— Electricity..... 12
——— Heat..... 12
——— Sound 12
——— 's Faraday as a Discoverer..... 5
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——— Horace 26
——— History of England 1
——— Three Centuries of English Literature 7
——————— Modern History 3
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——— on the Horse 27

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——— Stoics, Epicureans, and Sceptics.. 6
Zigzagging amongst Dolomites 23

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